

## The Dream Doll

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## The Dream Doll

by [PeppDream \(Pep\\_Pizza\)](#)

### Summary

When George bought that creepy doll from that creepy antique shop, he had planned on stuffing it into a drawer and never having to look at it again.

The last thing he expected was for the doll to become a blonde boy wearing a piss-colored hoodie.

### Notes

My second DNF fic!! If you find this one interesting, be sure to check out my profile to read my other ones :)

And I know that most of you are very understanding, but I give my usual reminder that this is a work of fiction. As such, these characters are not tangible to real people. Respect other people's ships and move along if DNF makes you uncomfortable.

This story was partly inspired by two fics: "The Boy in the Music Box" by maia\_archives, and... IDK THE OTHER ONE LMFAO. If you're an army and you think you know what the other one is, feel free to tell me... TuT

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

# The Doll

## Chapter Notes

Btw if you wanna read this [in Russian](#), that's apparently an option now :D

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sapnap had flown himself to the UK for a few weeks, and today would be his last day hanging out with George before he had to go back to Texas. They didn't really have anything in mind; the plan was just to wander around the Brighton streets, aimlessly moving from shop to shop.

After they've scoured through a couple small stores and bookstores, they come upon an antique shop George had never seen before. It was tucked neatly between two larger shops and, appearing much more shady than the buildings around it, George thinks he would've completely missed it if not for Sapnap pointing it out to him.

"Hey George, let's go here!"

"I don't know..." George had replied uncertainly, "It looks creepy as hell." It also didn't help that there was neither a name nor windows to the establishment.

"We'll just look around, it'll be quick. Come on!"

And against George's will, he was dragged into the shop. A bell tinkles as they enter. It's really as small as it looks outside. The whole store consists of a single room, with various items on display from shelves and tables. There's no other customers in sight but them two. At the far end of the room, a wrinkly old lady sits at the cashier, intently watching them.

Sapnap scampers to a nearby display, completely unaffected by the weirdness of the store. George follows hesitantly, trying to find some rhyme or reason to the items on sale, but they appear to have no correlation: from shiny jewelry to children's toys, and CDs to cross-stitches. Most items aren't even in good condition, making the products look like they came straight out of a garbage dump — random and disorganized.

If this was what all antique shops were like, George wasn't sure he liked them much.

Sapnap however, seems to be having fun. "George, look!" Sapnap had found a harmonica. "Check this out!" He blows into the instrument, and to George's surprise, a series of frog noises croak from the antique.

"What the...?"

"Neat, right?" His friend grins.

"You're an idiot."

As Sapnap goes back to exploring, George's eyes catch sight of something. He steps forward and holds it to get a better look. It's a simple white doll, with no arms or legs. It's of a size that fits his hand perfectly, and a smiley face so creepy it sends shivers down George's spine. This had to be for some sort of weird voodoo shit.

“What do you got there?”

George shrugs. “Just some creepy doll. Are you going to buy anything?”

Sapnap nods. “Yeah, this frog harmonica is hilarious. I’m gonna ask how much it is.”

“Nice.”

“What about you? Gonna buy the doll?”

George cringes at the mere thought. “No way, dude.”

“Why not?” Sapnap asks, poking the doll good-naturedly. “It’s cute.”

“It is *not* cute,” George sputters. “It looks like something that would curse people.”

“Aw, come on, you should get it! You haven’t even bought anything yet, you should get at least *something* by the end of today.”

George hesitates. “No, it’s creepy.”

Sapnap shrugs. “Suit yourself, scaredy-pants.”

George scowls as Sapnap heads to the register. The old lady smiles at them (creepily, if George must add) as they approach.

“Hey, I was wondering how much this item costs?”

Because none of the items in the shop have price or scan tags, George expects the lady to maybe refer to a reference price sheet before speaking. But almost immediately, she tells Sapnap the price. George wouldn’t be surprised if she was just pulling numbers out of her ass.

His friend completes the purchase and the old lady turns to George. “And what’ll it be for you, young man?”

“Oh, he’s not—”

George interrupts Sapnap as he steps forward and places the doll on the counter.

“Just this, please.”

George watches, smugly, as Sapnap’s expression morphs into surprise.

“Ah,” the lady gives a wrinkled smile as she examines the product, “A dream doll, I see. A good pick.”

“A... what now?”

“A dream doll,” the lady repeats. “If you put it by your bedside, it catches you good dreams.”

*So... a dream catcher?* George thinks to himself. He thinks such a creepy smile would only bring him more nightmares than anything, but okay. “Ok... well, how much is it?”

“That’ll be twenty pounds.”

Okay, definitely pulling numbers out of her ass. George sighs as he digs out the money and reluctantly hands it over. All this just to prove Sapnap wrong. He was probably going to regret this

later.

The lady, seeming to notice George's tense mood, gives him a reassuring smile. "Do not overthink it. After all, all those who come into my shop cannot leave without something from it."

"Um... what?"

The lady does not extrapolate on her enigmatic statement, merely placing the doll in a brown paper bag and handing it back to him. "Have a nice day," she finishes mysteriously.

So that was how George and Sapnap ended their shopping day, with Sapnap laughing at George's unexpected buy, and with one extra creepy voodoo doll (or *dream doll*, whatever) in George's possession. He shivers, imagining having to bring it to his apartment and stare at the creepy smile whenever he looks at it.

It hasn't even been ten minutes, and he's already starting to regret buying the doll.

## Chapter End Notes

This is the shortest chapter out of all the ones I've prepared, so consider it a prologue of sorts :)

I've already written out most of the next chapters, so updates will be frequent. Be sure to subscribe if you want to be notified with updates!

# Man In Green

## Chapter Summary

“Oh my god, you’re a burglar aren’t you?” George screams, ”That’s why you’re wearing that mask, to hide your face?!”

“George, that’s your name, right?”

George’s eyes widened. “How do you know—“

“I’m the ‘creepy’ doll you bought yesterday. You know, the white one with the smiley face? That’s me.”

## Chapter Notes

GUYS... GEORGE. SAW. COLOR !!!!!!! I'M SO HAPPY FOR HIM  
ASDFGTHJKL TvT

and the fact that he shared that experience with Dream, I'm just... :')

Ok, rant over lol. (Go watch George's newest video if you haven't already !! )

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Hey Luca,” George smiles at his cat when he’s greeted at the door, “Did you miss me?”

Luca meows at him, in what might be a yes. George appreciatively pets the cat’s head before it patters away. George stands there for a moment, to soak in the state of his apartment. The couch with unkempt blankets, the two cups left out in the kitchen, the singular toothbrush in front of his bathroom sink. It felt so... empty, without another person here. Sapnap had already boarded his plane back to Texas, so now it was just George all by himself. He can’t help the wave of loneliness that hits him.

He snorts, suddenly, at the sight of the smiling doll sitting on his coffee table. George had almost forgotten about it. *Almost*. He hadn’t put it at his bedside, despite what the old lady had told him. No amount of superstition would convince him to put that thing next to him while he’s sleeping. He half wants to hide it away right now and never have to look at it again, but seeing it reminds him of Sapnap and makes him feel a little less lonely, so he decides to keep it where it is.

“I guess I can go work on a Minecraft video or something,” he thinks wearily to himself.

So he manages to drag his ass to his chair and get some coding done for a new idea of his. In a couple hour’s time, he receives a text from Sapnap telling him he’s arrived safely back in Texas.

Shortly afterwards, the two have settled back into their normal routine. They play some bed wars and pvp games, and after taking a break to eat, they play some more minecraft on a survival world. When it gets late, they bid each other goodnight and leave the teamspeak. George is alone again. The loneliness hits him again, more strongly this time.

Feeling too miserable to sleep, George decides to try recording for his next youtube video. Halfway through the recording, he gets a text from Sapnap.

*Snapmap: hey do u still have that cute doll*

*George: it is not cute*

*George: but yeah, I do*

*George: why?*

*Snapmap: send me a pic, I wanna show Bad*

At that very moment, George heard a loud noise outside his room. It wasn't so much of a *crash* as it was a loud *thump*. He had no idea what sort of thing would produce such a sound, but he has a pretty good guess it had something to do with his cat.

"Luca, what did you knock over this time," he sighs, pausing his minecraft game and getting up from his chair. When he steps out of his room to investigate, he notices two things:

One, that Luca had followed him as he left his room, meaning his cat had been with him the whole time and could not have been the cause of the noise.

And two, that there is a stranger in his living room.

Said stranger is wearing a vomit-colored hoodie, and is sitting with his whole body on the coffee table, like he's made himself fucking comfortable there or something.

George's mouth falls open with shock. "Wh-who are you? How did you get into my apartment?!"

The man (George assumes it's a man, his figure is too large for a girl) snaps his head towards the sound of George's voice. George realizes with a startle that the strange man is wearing a mask. And that the mask wears an (oddly familiar) creepy smile.

Because the mask only covers the top-half of the stranger's face, George can see how his mouth transforms into a surprised "o". "You—"

"Oh my god, you're a burglar aren't you?" George screams, "That's why you're wearing that mask, to hide your face?!"

The thief shakes his head, almost comically. "No, listen—"

But it was at that moment, George noticed that the doll had disappeared from his coffee table. "Oh my god, d-did you steal the doll??" Scenarios flicker through George's panicked mind. He could try calling the police, but it would take too long. He could probably take on the stranger himself, right?

But as the man moves to stand up from his sitting position, George quickly realizes he would be no match against this towering beast of a human.

"Listen to me," the stranger says, putting up his hands, "I swear I'm not a thief." He talks strangely, without any British accent. Was he a foreigner?

George blinks, surprised at the man's audacity to lie in a situation like this. "You actually expect me to believe you? Why the fuck would I? You're literally a *masked stranger* standing in *my* living room."

The man grimaces, then shrugs. “I mean, you *did* bring me here. Where did you expect me to be?”

If George has been confused before, he was only more confused now. “What— what are you talking about? I didn’t let you in. Speaking of which, how *did* you get in? I locked the front door!”

“George, that’s your name, right?”

George’s eyes widened. “How do you know—“

“I’m the ‘creepy’ doll you bought yesterday. You know, the white one with the smiley face? That’s me.”

George stares. This dude... this dude had gone fucking bonkers.

“You don’t believe me,” the stranger sighs after a moment.

“How can I?” George narrows his eyes. “Your story is stupid. Only an idiot would believe it.”

“...what if I can prove it?”

“What?”

He appears to be thinking. “Your friend, Nick, was it? Yesterday, he bought a frog harmonica at the same shop you got me.”

George takes a sharp intake of breath. He was right. But no one else had been around except the cashier lady. How did he know?

“And the old lady charged you twenty pounds for me. Which is like, around twenty five USD, I think? Totally overpriced for some stupid doll.”

“I thought she was pulling numbers out of her ass.”

“She was,” the stranger confirms. “I’ve been in that shop for awhile, and I can say with certainty that her price range is crazy, no joke.”

George snickers, then stops as he remembers the situation they’re in. “So... you’re not just some stalker? You’re really, actually, that tiny white doll with the creepy smile.”

The man smiles almost pitifully, tapping at his mask. “Who else?”

George slowly drags a hand down his face. What the hell has he gotten himself into. He knew he shouldn’t have bought that doll! This was all Sapnap’s fault. “I think I’m going crazy.”

The stranger laughs. “Hey, I think your cat likes me.” George looks. Luca has wound himself around the stranger’s legs, already befriending the enemy.

George takes a deep breath. “At this point, I really hope you’re just lying to confuse me. But if what you’re saying is the truth, and there’s some kind of freaky magic stuff going on... you have a lot of explaining to do.”

A brief flash of relief shows on the stranger’s face (or, just his mouth?) before he nods. “I know. Let’s sit first. It’s uh, kind of a long story.”

“Tell me your name first,” George requests, plopping himself onto his couch, “It’s weird that you know mine and I don’t know yours.”



“Oh, right.” The man pulls back his hood, revealing a shocking mop of blonde hair. “The name’s Clay.”

*...like the pottery kind of clay?* George thinks to himself. “And you can take off your mask. It looks uncomfortable to wear... how do you even see through that thing? If I’m going to talk to a stranger, I’d much rather talk to a human face than a weird smiley one.”

“Um... about that,” Clay laughs sheepishly, sitting on the couch too. Luca hops into his lap like second-nature. “It doesn’t really bother me that much, but uh. I can’t take the mask off.”

“You’re kidding me.”

“No, seriously, look.” Clay turns around, showing George the band that keeps his mask on. Attached to the band are several smiley face pins. “These pins keep the band intact, so I can’t take it off.”

“Then just take the pins off?”

Clay snorts. “I wish it were that easy, but I can’t.”

“...you have a lot more explaining to do that I thought,” George eventually says.

“I don’t even know where to start,” Clay sighs, absentmindedly petting George’s cat. For some reason, it doesn’t bother him that much to see a stranger touching Luca. “It’s been so long since I’ve had... any sort of human interaction, I guess.”

“Well, how you became a doll might be a good place to start.”

Clay visibly swallows. “Right. So, uh, I was cursed.” At George’s eyebrow raise, Clay slightly rotates his head. “I’m rolling my eyes,” he explains helpfully. “And yes, I know it’s hard to believe. But that actually happened to me.”

George felt conflicted. He was probably being a total idiot, believing this stranger’s words. But even still, he can’t help asking, “Well, why were you cursed? *How* were you cursed?”

“I don’t remember the specifics,” Clay admits. “Honestly, it’s all kind of blurry. I don’t remember a lot of my life before getting cursed. All I know is my name and where I used to live. Even the person who cursed me, I don’t remember what they look like at all. And I don’t really know why they cursed me, either.”

“So basically, you don’t remember shit.”

Clay wheezes a bit at George’s frank statement. “Well, I have all of my memories of being a doll. When I’m not asleep, at least. I was in that lady’s shop for at least a few weeks, so I remember that. And when I become human, I’ll remember those memories too.”

George scratches his head. “So the curse is... you become a doll, sometimes?”

“Specifically, I’m a doll until midnight. Then I become a human until 7am, and go back to being a doll afterwards. Plus, I have to wear the mask at all times.”

“What about yesterday?” George accuses, “Why didn’t you become human then?”

“I have a choice not to,” Clay explains. “You had a friend over, and I just thought it’d be easier to explain myself to one person instead of two.”

George crosses his arms, thinking. “Well, how do you break the curse and get your memories back? Or did you forget that too?”

“Actually, I *do* know how to break it.” Clay shrugs. “It’s a pity it’s the only thing I know, but I’m fairly sure it was ingrained into my brain so I couldn’t forget it.”

“Okay... then how do you break it?”

A second of hesitation. Then, “Ten things,” Clay whispers. “I need to find ten things to live for.”

“...what?”

“I know, it’s stupid. But I remember this, and I know it’s true. The pins fall off each time I find something, and once I’ve found all ten things, the mask will come off and the curse will be gone.”

George frowns, recalling the number of pins. “You only have nine pins though?”

“Yeah, I’ve uh, found one already.”

“Oh. What was it?”

Clay looks away then, seeming embarrassed. “It’s um, the stars. At night. They’re really pretty.”

It’s an unexpectedly honest statement. George can’t help it, but he softens seeing Clay’s small smile. “Hm... alright. At least, you don’t appear to have really high standards.”

Clay laughs, lightly hitting George’s shoulder. “What? You idiot.”

George can’t help grinning back. “I didn’t say it’s a bad thing. It just means your curse will be easier to break, right?”

Clay chews his lip, looking thoughtful. “Mmm yeah, I guess so.”

“So... how long have you been cursed for?”

“I dunno,” Clay replies, tilting his head. “What year is it?”

“2020.”

“Month?”

“June.”

“Oh,” Clay visibly swallows, looking nervous for some reason. “Date?”

“22nd. Oh wait, 23rd. I forgot it’s technically the next day already.”

“Hm... okay.” A long pause. “Well, I’ve been cursed for almost a year now.”

“A *year*? And you’ve only found *one* thing to live for?” George groans. “I take back what I said about your curse being easy to break. How can you only have found one thing in an entire *year*?”

“It’s not *my* fault!” Clay grumbles, the quirk of his lips looking frustrated, his voice growing louder with every word, “I just, never got a chance to! I’m only awake for 7 hours a day and it’s always in the dead of night. Plus, no one ever listens to me long enough to be willing to help. How am I *supposed* to enjoy life with fucking restrictions like that?!”

“Okay, *okay!* Calm down. I get it.” Clay calms down as instructed, but he doesn’t look happy about it. “So, what, you’ve finally told someone about your curse. Now what?”

Clay appears bewildered. “What do you mean, *now what* ?”

“Well, how can I help you?”

Clay blinks, clearly confused. “*Help?* Me?”

“Well, who else, idiot! You’re the only other person in this room.”

Clay’s mouth appears frozen. “R-really?” It quickly stretches into a grin. “You’ll really try to help?”

“Immean,” George pauses, feeling his ears turn pink. God, why did his smile make him feel so... good? “I can’t promise any results, but I can try.”

“Wow. Wow. ” Clay is laughing in disbelief, a hand on his face (mask). “I seriously thought you wouldn’t believe me. Or you wouldn’t care. Or you’d kick me out. Or—”

“Wait. I didn’t say you could stay.” Clay’s face falls, which makes guilt prickle in George. “Look, I said I’d be willing to help you with your curse and all, but do you have to live in *my* apartment?”

“There’s... there’s nowhere else for me to go,” Clay says quietly. “I don’t have money or anything. And what would be the point? I’d just turn back into a doll by morning.”

George’s mouth opens, but nothing comes out. He has nothing good to say to that. Clay just has the... *saddest*... pout on his face. “F-fine. You... you can stay here.”

He brightens up again, happy like a puppy. “You mean it?”

“Yes. Don’t make me regret it though.”

Clay nods vigorously. “M-hm! I’ll be a good boy!”

“...God, you’re so annoying. I’m already regretting it.”

His new... roommate, George guesses, wheezes a little and grins good-naturedly at him.

“Seriously, thanks so much man. You’re doing me a huge favor just letting me stay here.”

“Do I need to feed you too?” George asks out of curiosity.

“Oh, yeah. I guess so. I don’t feel hunger as a doll, but I’ll definitely need to eat if I’m planning on staying in this form.”

George groans. “Fucking great.”

Clay chuckles. “Don’t worry, I can survive off of very little. Just give me a bag of chips every now and then, I’ll be fine.”

George’s phone suddenly vibrates. He almost forgot he had it on him. He opens it to find a couple new messages from Snapnap:

*Snapmap: yo did you leave me on read*

*Snapmap: wth not cool man*

*Snapmap: jk jk*

*Snapmap: srsly tho whats the holdup*

*Snapmap: r u asleep??*

George internally face-palms. His friend is ridiculous. He debates telling him what happened, but in the end, he decides not to.

*George: I uh lost it, I think*

*George: I'm too tired to look for it rn, so I'll send u a pic in the morning*

Speaking of him being tired... it was really late. George looks up at Clay, who's decided to start becoming much-too-friendly with his cat. The two are literally cuddling, even though they had only *just* met each other.

"I'm going to bed," George announces, sliding off his couch. "I'll try to think of ways to help you tomorrow. What about you?"

Clay's smiling, his attention focused solely on Luca. "I think I'll stay up. I mean, I mostly sleep in my doll form these days anyway, so I'm not tired at all. And I wanna play with Luca~" he coos at the cat. George doesn't want to admit it, but he's kind of cute when he does that.

"Okay. Well, just make yourself at home then. Goodnight, Clay."

"Night, George~"

George rolls his eyes and slouches back to his room. God, he hopes he didn't make a huge mistake agreeing to everything he did tonight. With a tired sigh, he closes his minecraft game and flops onto his bed. Maybe when he wakes up in the morning, he'll find out it was all just some weird dream.

At least, and George doesn't want to admit it, but at least he doesn't feel so lonely anymore.



## Chapter End Notes

Tysm for reading! Consider following me on tumblr: [peppdream.tumblr.com](https://peppdream.tumblr.com)

# In The Wind

## Chapter Summary

It happens suddenly, and there's no sparkles or shining or magicalness to it whatsoever. Simply, one second the doll is there. And the next second, Clay is there.

"Miss me?" Clay asks with a cheeky grin.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When George wakes up in the morning, he feels surprisingly good. Sappnap leaving yesterday felt like something that happened weeks ago. It didn't bother George as much, for some reason. Guess a good night's sleep was all it took to get over some things.

George stretches awake, and notices his cat sitting at the side of his bed. "Luca! Good morning."

His cat looks weirdly happy. His tail keeps wagging around. George doesn't think much about it, but he pauses when he sees something strange.

"...Luca? What do you have in your mouth?"

His cat obediently patters over and drops the object in his lap. George picks it up and stares. *Oh*. Suddenly the events of yesterday come crashing down on him. That thing that happened yesterday wasn't a dream?

The thing in his hand is one of those smiley-face pins.

George leaps out of his bed, running to his living room. There's no sight of the stranger. Only the white doll sits there, alone on the couch. He stares at the doll for what feels like forever, then back down at the pin in his hand.

George's mind is whirling. So, the man hadn't been lying? He was seriously magically cursed and turned into a voodoo doll by morning. But what was this pin doing here? Had Clay really found something to live for in the span of a single night? George checks the time on his phone. 8am. Hm, it matches up to the story, but he still can't quite believe it. He does a quick check of the kitchen, bathroom, and his room to see if anything is missing. Everything is where it's supposed to be. In any case, Clay wasn't lying about not being a burglar.

The sudden realization of what George has witnessed sends him into slight hyperventilation. Had he been too tired to think straight last night? What kind of idiot would agree on a whim to help someone break their magical-transformation curse? Actually, what kind of idiot would even *believe* in that kind of stuff? It sounds like shit out of a fairytale.

George gently sets the pin down on the coffee table. "Luca?" His cat meows back at him. "Was Clay on his best behavior?" The cat doesn't reply, merely rubbing himself on George's leg. Hm, okay then. He would take that as a yes.

He contemplates putting the doll back on the table, but figures it'd be dumb to have a rehash of

what happened yesterday. Sighing at himself, George takes the doll and walks back to his room, setting it down on his bed. Remembering what Sapnap asked for yesterday, he snaps a picture and checks his messages:

*Snapmap: lol dude how in the world did you lose it*

*Snapmap: I bet you just hid it away somewhere so you'd never have to look at it again*

George cringes at how closely Sapnap had guessed the what-if. He really had almost done just that. If George had stuffed the doll away in a drawer or something, it was unlikely Clay would've appeared at all. George isn't sure what to think of that.

*George: omg shut up. I didn't do that*

*George: just take the stupid picture <image attached>*

Sapnap is definitely asleep right now, so George isn't surprised he doesn't get a response right away. He looks up from his phone, wondering what he should do. At this time, he'd usually dig up some junk to eat and spend his day in front of his computer recording minecraft. But the doll, and Clay... it keeps nagging at him from the back of his mind.

Not sure what he's planning to do, George heads to the front door to put on his shoes. His cat had followed him out of curiosity. "Hey Luca, I'm gonna head out for a bit. Keep Clay company, will you?"

Luca blinks at him. Then with a single wave of his tail, he's bounded back to George's room like he actually understood George. Or maybe he did. Who knew how the hell cats worked.

George takes a step out of his apartment, and a shock of cool air slaps his face. He hasn't been out this early in the morning for a while, but the air is refreshing. He makes a mental reminder to go outside more often.

He eats a quick breakfast at a restaurant before aimlessly strolling the streets of Brighton, looking for... well. George wasn't sure what he was looking for. He was trying to get inspiration to keep his promise for helping out Clay, but it honestly wasn't looking too good for him. Every shop and restaurant appeared to open after seven and close before midnight. He was starting to see why Clay had been so frustrated. What was there to even do from 12 to 7 in the morning? Look at stars? No wonder that had been the only thing Clay had found.

After a long fruitless afternoon of searching, George had given up and gone back to his apartment. He finds Luca obediently curled up around the doll, and two new messages from Sapnap:

*Snapmap: ooo is it on your bed?*

*Snapmap: did you actually sleep with it next to you?? Aww*

*George: nO I did NOT*

*George. you're such an idiot*

*Snapmap: ;P*

*Snapmap: wanna play on Bad's livestream?*

*George: sure lol*

George figures he deserves a break. So he spends the rest of his day following the normal routine, playing minecraft with his friends. But as it draws closer and closer to night, the unavoidable encounter he was going to have with Clay begins to pester the back of George's mind once more. He's therefore unable to focus, and messes up a lot in-game. His friends are thankfully having too much fun to notice his flukes though.

"Hey, Bad?"

"Mm?"

"What would you say makes life worth living?"

Silence. Then, a sputter of laughter from Sapnap. "Pshh, what kind of question is that?!"

George rolls his eyes, hitting Sapnap's in-game character once. "I'm serious!"

Bad, on the other hand, appears confused. "Um... are you okay?"

George realizes too late that his question may have sounded a touch too depressing. "Oh, yeah." He laughs sheepishly, "Um, it's not really a question for me— I mean. That's not really what I meant."

"Then what did you mean?" Sapnap questions.

"Just, what do you think makes life enjoyable?"

"Oh... okay." Bad seems to consider the question for a second. "Well, I don't really know. I guess I like to cook?"

"But his question was what *makes life worth living*," Sapnap retorts. "And the answer is obviously *foood!*"

Bad sputters. "W-well, the two are *related!* I cook food to eat it, you muffin!"

George laughs. "He has a point there, Sapnap."

"Ugh, whatever."

"What about you, George?" Bad asks, "What would your answer be?"

"Mm..." George doesn't have an answer. He *wishes* he knew. It's what he was doing outside all this morning anyway, looking for the answer. "I dunno. Minecraft?"

His friends laugh, but they both voice their agreement (kind of sarcastically, but whatever). Finally, Bad ends his livestream and they mess around a bit on a survival world before leaving the teamspeak. George stares at his silent computer for a good minute before pulling out his phone.

"Hello? Yes, I'd like to order a pizza."



An hour and a half till midnight. George thinks he's going crazy.

He's probably paced around his room a million times by now. Even his cat looks annoyed with him. But he can't help it. George is a nervous wreck. He can't focus on anything, much less on recording his next video. All he can do is fiddle his thumbs and wait and wait and wait. Count down the minutes, second by second.

Then finally, *finally*, it's down to the last five minutes. George stops his pacing, struck with a sudden desire to tidy up. He pushes the blankets to the side, sets Clay the doll on one side of the bed and sits himself on the other. Luca crawls into George's lap, appearing contented.

*Two more minutes until midnight.* George half wonders if it'll all end up proving to be a lie. That he might wait until midnight, and nothing happens, because Clay lied to him. He wonders what he would do then. Forget that this ever happened? Actually stick the doll into a drawer and never look at it again? Eat that giant pizza he ordered all by himself?

*One more minute,* George glances at his phone. His leg is getting jittery, much to his cat's annoyance. Luca leaves his lap, meowing irritably. "Sorry," George apologizes. His cat turns his head away, nudging the doll. "Hey," George laughs, "don't do that."

*Ten seconds.* George grabs Luca and puts him back in his lap, gaze focused on the doll. *Any second now...*

It happens suddenly, and there's no sparkles or shining or magicalness to it whatsoever. Simply, one second the doll is there. And the next second, Clay is there.

George jumps a little when Clay appears. Actually just *appears*, out of thin air, sitting cross-legged on his bed like he's right at home. Clay *was* real after all. George can't help the little bubble of relief he feels when seeing him. (Though, he tries to convince himself it's just because he doesn't want the pizza to go to waste.)

"Miss me?" Clay asks with a cheeky grin.

George rubs his eyes. "God, that was so sudden."

"Sorry for making you wait," Clay smiles sheepishly, petting Luca who has, once again, made a straight beeline over to be coddled by a fucking *stranger*. "But seriously, what was with all the pacing?"

"The... pacing?" George blinks. "Wait. Y-you saw me!?"

"Well, yeah. I told you I remember things as a doll, remember?"

George raises his eyebrows. He... had honestly forgotten, like an idiot. "How long were you watching me for?"

"Dunno, I think I woke up... maybe an hour ago?"

"You watched me pace around my room for an hour?!"

Clay's mouth twists into a frown. "I mean, it's not like I had a choice. You're one to talk though. What were *you* pacing around so much for?"

"W-well, you can't blame me for being nervous, can you?" George sputters. "It's not everyday someone buys a voodoo doll and it becomes a living fucking human complete with a creepy mask and a deadly curse."

Clay wheezes at his defense, much to George's annoyance. "But uh, I'm glad to see you didn't throw me out. So, thanks for keeping your word."

"Yeah, of course," George raises an eyebrow. "I said I'd let you stay, didn't I?"



“Yeah, but, I wasn’t entirely sure if you were lying then.” Clay’s face is turned away. He seems embarrassed. “But now I know you actually meant what you said, so... thanks.”

“Oh,” George can’t help the pink that rises to his cheeks. “Well, I *did* buy you, so you’re kind of my responsibility anyway.” Clay cracks a smile at that, and George somehow manages to smile back. “So... are you hungry, by any chance?”

Clay perks up a bit. “A little, I guess. Do you have a bag of chips I can steal?”

“I have something better,” George answers cheerfully, climbing off the bed. “Come on.”

Clay points his face upwards, making sniffing noises. “Is that smell what I think it is?”

“Don’t ruin the surprise for yourself,” George laughs. “Just come to the kitchen and see for yourself.”

The two walk to said location, Luca trailing after them. Clay gasps next to George at the sight of the pizza box. “A PIZZA?”

“Yah.”

“And from Pizza Hut!!” Clay sounds way too excited for his own good. “I haven’t eaten Pizza Hut pizza in *forever*. Can we eat it now?”

George rolls his eyes. “Obviously, I ordered it for you dumbass.”

Clay opens the box and, when he sees the fully untouched pizza, he hesitates. “Um...”

“I wasn’t sure what you’d like, so I just got cheese and pepperoni.” At Clay’s silence, George continues, “Yeah, it’s gotten cold, I know. It’s been sitting there for about two hours. It’s fine though, we can just microwave it—”

“No, um, that’s not what I was going to say.”

George pauses in the middle of grabbing plates. “Then... what?”

“Have you eaten dinner yet?”

“Oh. No, I haven’t,” George admits.

A small smile grows on Clay’s face. “Aww were you waiting for me so we could eat together? *George...!*”

George’s face flushes. “N-no, you idiot! I was... I was just too nervous to eat,” he lies. “God, you’re so annoying.”

Clay hums happily in response. “You know you love me~” he jokes.

So they microwave the stupid pizza and eat it together on their respective plates, gasping when they bite into a piece that’s particularly hot, or arguing when one of them doesn’t eat the crust. George doesn’t want to admit it, but he’s actually having fun. Even though it’s a little weird talking to someone with a mask, Clay is a fun and honest guy. He’s a bit of a jokester and seems to find irritating people funny, but overall, he’s not a bad person.

Before they knew it, the pizza was completely gone. Clay had eaten most of it though. When he burps with satisfaction, George giggles.

“God, ew~ Hold your burps to yourself, yellow man.” At Clay’s confused look, George points and explains, “Your hoodie.”

Clay still looks bemused. “My hoodie is *green*.”

“Oh.” No wonder it looked like such an icky color. “I’m color-blind.”

“Oh,” Clay mirrors George’s response, his eyes wide.

George ignores the look, walking around Clay until he’s behind him. “Hm...” He gives the band on Clay’s head an experimental tug. As Clay had said, it doesn’t come off.

“Hm? What are you doing?”

George’s fingers brush against some of the blonde’s hair. It’s soft. “You still have eight pins,” George observes, a bit disappointed. “I guess food isn’t worth living for. Speaking of your pins, how did you lose one yesterday?”

“Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you. It’s because of your cat.”

...what. “My cat? *Luca*?”

Clay coos at Luca again, who’s been sitting at their feet the whole time. “He’s just the sweetest, cutest thing, George.” At George’s look of disbelief, Clay raises his hands in defense. “Alright, *fine*, not as cute as you. Happy?”

George facepalms to hide his blush. “You’re so stupid. Seriously, you... you think *cats* make life worth living?”

“Sometimes it’s the little things in life we have to enjoy,” Clay grins, tickling the underside of Luca’s face. Luca meows back in contentment. “We bonded a whole night, we just have a connection now.” He suddenly looks so soft, George kind of understands why a pin fell off.

“Wow, okay. That’s good then, right? Eight left, one down already. Looks like I’m better at this than I thought. I should get a career in curse-breaking.”

“But it was Luca—“

“Who bought you the pizza, Clay.”

Clay laughs. “All thanks to my sweet Georgie, of course~”

“You’re unbelievable,” George snorts, but he’s smiling.

“So... what now?”

George checks the time. It’s *so* late, and he’s honestly kind of tired. But for some reason, he doesn’t want the night to end just yet. “We’re going outside,” he suddenly decides.

“Oh?” Clay shrugs, “Okay, I’m open to anything. Where are we headed?”

George doesn’t answer. He doesn’t know either. George grabs a jacket and, after Clay kisses Luca goodbye, the two step out into the chilly night. George notices, with relief, that he can see the stars poking out of the sky.

“We’re just going to walk around for a bit,” George finally answers.

Clay doesn't reply. The eyes of his mask are trained towards the sky. George smiles.

"By the way, where are we?"

"What do you mean? You don't know we're in the UK?"

"I could've figured *that* out just from your accent," Clay replies. "I mean, where are we *in* the UK?"

"Oh. Well, this is Brighton." Clay gives a hum in response to George's answer. "Where are you from, then?"

"Florida."

"Whoa... from the US?! All the way across the sea?"

"You can travel unbelievable distances as a doll," Clay shrugs. "I just ended up on a plane one day without any memory of how I got there, so I've been transported here and there."

So Clay was an American, just like Sapnap. Interesting.

As George observes their surroundings, he can't help sighing. As expected, not a single place is open this late. All the buildings are dark behind their windows. Except... up ahead, one building's lights are on. George can hardly believe his eyes. Was there really something open at this time of night?!

"George, look! It's a bike rental!"

George frowns. He didn't have a good feeling about this. "I guess so."

"Do you have your own bike?"

"No, why should I? I have a car."

Clay whistles. "We should totally rent a bike."

Aaand there was the bad feeling. "Clay, no."

"What, why not? Come on, don't you want to help me make the pins fall off?"

George hesitates at Clay's pleas. "Alright, alright! But I'm just going to rent one for you."

"What? But I want you to ride next to me—"

"It's one or none, Clay."

He scratches his head. "Okay, just one then."

George manages to stop Clay seconds before he enters the shop. *You look like a serial killer, it's better if I go alone*, he had explained. Clay looked disappointed to have to stay behind, but he listened nonetheless. Then George went in alone, rented a bike for an hour, and wheeled the thing out. Clay looked absolutely delighted at the sight of it.

"Aww thanks George!"

"You're welcome," he mutters, watching as Clay easily hops on and rides a couple circles around

the empty street.

“You sure you don’t want to try?”

“Positive.”

Clay directs the bike to a sudden stop in front of George. “Hey, George.”

“What.”

“...do you not know how to ride a bike?”

George winces. His reaction is obviously enough of an answer, since Clay doesn’t ask again.

“Hey, stand on the pegs.”

“Excuse me?”

“You don’t need to know *how* to ride a bike to ride *on* one.” At George's blank stare, Clay smiles. “Come on~ Trust me!”

That’s kind of a stupid thing to say, since Clay is literally only a stranger George met yesterday. Still, George does trust Clay, for whatever twisted reason. Maybe it was his stupid grin. Maybe it was because Clay filled the lonely pit inside of George. So with that thought in mind, he puts his feet on the bike pegs, resting his hands on Clay’s shoulders.

“If I fall off, I’m going to kill you.”

Clay gives a little wheeze. “George, don’t worry! I’m a biking *god*.”

And just like that, they were off. George blinks at the sensation of wind buffeting his face, his hands gripping Clay’s firm shoulders. It’s weird, but he feels... *safe*. Even though he’s precariously balanced on a metal pole sticking out of a bike wheel, it’s surprisingly nice. As Clay steadily bikes on, George finds himself relaxing and enjoying himself. This really wasn’t too bad.

He suddenly notices a glint of light. “Oh my god, Clay!”

“Wh-what?” Clay sounds surprised, a hint of worry lacing his tone. “George, are you okay?”

“Yeah, but, one of your pins just fell off!”

A slow grin spreads across Clay’s face. “Ah-HA! I knew renting a bike was a good idea!”

George rolls his eyes as Clay whoots several times. “Yeah, yeah, just take my job for me, why don’t you.” He’s pretending to be annoyed, but he’s secretly pretty excited too. Clay really was so peculiar. This night had surely taken an unexpected turn, but now they were one step closer to breaking Clay’s curse.

After some time, Clay finally circles around and picks up the pin that dropped (“It’s a souvenir of our accomplishments!”) before biking back to the rental. They have to return the bike early, because George is tired and nearly falls asleep on the bike ride. His legs feel so wobbly from standing on the pegs that Clay has to half-drag him back to the apartment. He even tucks George into bed and everything.

“Oh my god,” George had yawned, “Stop babying me.”

“George, you’ve done a lot for me today,” Clay had smiled. He had such a soothing voice. Had his voice always sounded that nice? “Just sleep now.”

So George closes his eyes and sleeps to the sound of Clay’s voice. When he wakes up from good dreams the next morning, he finds the doll sitting right next to his pillow.



## Chapter End Notes

That bike scene is inspired by the song "If I Could Write a Bike." I found it through [this DNF animatic](#). (go check it out, I think it's pretty good!)

Also, that fictional bike rental opens at such a crappy hour, RIP the poor employee that works there :')

And tysm Ryuity for your support!! You're the absolute best ♥♥♥

# Sweet Dreams

## Chapter Summary

"I don't think I'll play minecraft tonight," Clay hums in thought, "It's more fun playing with you."

George feels his face start to flush. "You—"

"It's funny when you scream."

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Oh my god, it's so *hot*, " George complains.

"It is pretty hot," Sapnap agrees.

They had begun live streaming in the afternoon, which had obviously been a poor choice of time. The place where George's hand met the keys were sticky with sweat, and his ass felt stuck to his chair. He felt gross and icky all over. And what made it even worse was that he didn't have any air conditioning.

"I'm *dying* from the heat," George groans, narrowly avoiding getting hit by a piglin. "I'm literally going to *die*, Sapnap. Get me *out* of here..."

"In the game or in real life?"

"*Both*."

His friend laughs at his expense. "It can't be *that* bad."

"Twenty-seven degrees celsius, Sapnap. *Twenty seven degrees*."

"Dude, use fahrenheit. I don't know what temperature that is."

"Or," George grumbles, "switch your dumb fahrenheit to the metric system. It's *obviously* better. Every country except *yours* uses celsius."

The two argue a bit more about american number systems before deciding they'll need to stop the stream. The heat was really starting to get unbearable. Even Luca seemed more irritable than usual. George couldn't wait until it was nighttime, and the stupid heat would finally go away (and maybe, a certain someone would come back).

George feeds his cat and makes himself some ramen, waiting once again for time to tick down to midnight. He's still nervous, but it's a lot more toned down compared to yesterday. He hadn't been sure Clay would show up then. This time though, he knew what to expect.

All this free time to sit and do nothing gets him wondering, though. Say that one day, they actually break the curse and Clay's mask comes off. What would he look like? What color were his eyes?

If George had to guess, he'd say blue; that's usually the pairing, blonde hair and blue eyes. George likes the color blue. He hopes it's that and not some boring brown color like his.

As on time as ever, midnight strikes and the man in icky-yellow (green) appears. "Hey," Clay greets, sprawled out across George's bed as if he lives there. "What's up?"

"You're so lucky you only become human at night," George comments off-handedly, slurping noodles from his chair. "Today the heat was *crazy*."

Clay chuckles. "The plus of being a cursed doll, I guess." He gestures towards the cup in George's hands. "Any for me?"

"Yeah, you can grab one for yourself in the kitchen."

Clay gracefully rolls off the bed and leaves the room. George isn't even sure how a person can gracefully *roll off a bed*, but Clay somehow managed it, so he decides not to question it. Setting his cup aside for a moment, he starts opening up a new minecraft world.

When Clay returns, Luca is with him. As expected. George waves him over. "Have you ever played Minecraft?"

"Dunno," Clay answers. "Probably? I don't remember because of the memory wipe and all, but if you asked me something about it, I think I could answer. Why?"

"You're playing minecraft today, er, tonight," George corrects, getting up from his chair. "I think it'll be a good distraction for you. Like, I can't spend every night hanging out with you, or I'm gonna become sleep deprived and grumpy."

"...Touché."

"You know if you're any good at it?"

"Again, don't remember," Clay replies, taking George's place in front of the computer. "Guess we'll find out."

George decides to stand by and watch for now, in case Clay needs his assistance. Clay snickers when he sees George's IGN. ("*Georgenotfound?* But you're right here!" "Shut up.") Things are looking good at first. Moving around the world with ease, Clay's character hits the tree, makes a crafting table, and in record time, he already has all stone tools.

George blinks, suddenly realizing what's just happened. "What the fu—"

"Oh, a ravine!"

George sees Clay backing up, and immediately knows what he plans to do. "*Clay*," he warns, not seeing a water bucket in his hotbar, "do *not*—"

Clay's character jumps, not to the other side, but straight into the ravine. But right before touching the bottom, he lands into a cobweb and drops to the floor, perfectly unharmed. At George's dumbfounded expression, he wheezes. "George, don't worry about me. I know what I'm doing."

"You're crazy," George frowns. He hadn't expected Clay to be *that* good at minecraft. "Since you're clearly fine doing this without my help, I'm going to sleep."

"Night George~" Clay sing-songs. "Love you!"

George rolls his eyes and flops onto his bed. “Just don’t wake me up,” he grumbles.

“You have to say you love me back!” He can hear the pout in Clay’s voice.

“Good *night*, Clay.”

Clay is actually pretty obedient, and stays quiet throughout the night so George can drift to sleep easily. When he wakes up in the morning to good dreams again, George glances at his chair. The doll is sitting there, and his computer is still on. Curious as to how far the idiot has gotten, he plops the doll onto his desk and unpauses Clay’s game.

George’s mouth falls open, his eyes wide with disbelief. *What the...*

It’s an entire masterpiece... and a beautiful one, at that. An enormous two-story brick house built on a lake, chests lining every wall. There’s paths paved in birch lit by lanterns leading to a farm, a bamboo pond of colorful fish, and an iron golem standing guard next to a nether portal. A dragon egg sits on display in front of a giant statue of Clay’s doll-self, like a sacrificial offering. And a giant tower of obsidian and gold reaches to the sky, with the vertical light of a shining beacon above it. George checks Clay’s character, and finds him fully decked out in enchanted diamond armor and a netherite helmet.

*What the actual fuck. How much shit did Clay do in a single night??*

George’s foot nudges something on the ground. He looks, and is surprised once again. Honestly, Clay is full of surprises. He should know this by now, but for some reason, it still gets to him when he sees genuine progress for his friend’s curse. George can’t stop smiling.

On the floor is another smiley face pin.



George hasn’t recorded anything for a while now because of the constant distraction that was Clay. So, he came up with a brilliant idea: why not get Clay to play minecraft with him? Mix the to-do list with the distraction, and all his problems would be solved. Plus, Clay was clearly good at minecraft (maybe even better than George, though he finds it hard to accept). It also helped that Clay had a (mostly) attractive personality. Having him join in would enhance the video, not dampen it.

With these thoughts in mind, George had told Clay of his plan. “You won’t need to show your face or anything — I’ll just be recording our voices. We’re also going to play with certain plug-ins I’ve made, and try to beat the game with those changes.”

“But,” Clay pauses, looking confused, “You need two computers if we’re going to play together.”

“It’s fine!” George had replied, holding up another laptop, “I bought a second one.”

This seems to startle Clay, for some reason. “What? George!” He laughs a little, looking disbelieving and kind of... guilty? “You— why did you do that?”

“To play with you, obviously.” At Clay’s silence, George adds, “And... my old computer is getting kind of old anyway. I was going to buy a new one sooner or later.”

This makes Clay brighten up some, to George’s relief. Even though George can’t see Clay’s entire face, he thinks it’s so easy to tell what his friend is thinking sometimes.



George clears away his desk and brings a second chair so that Clay can play next to him. They spend the rest of the night laughing and making jokes and nearly killing each other when they make mistakes. It's the most fun George has had playing minecraft, probably ever. He doesn't know why he likes it so much, just that his and Clay's dynamic flow together really well. He doesn't want the night to end.

"Hey, George. It's almost seven."

George blinks at Clay, then checks the time on his phone. He was right — they literally played minecraft until it was morning. George was having so much fun he hadn't even realized. "Oh." Disappointment weighs inside him. Clay was going to disappear soon.

"Yeah," Clay nods. "I had a lot of fun, though! Thanks for inviting me to play."

George remembers they're recording, and nods. "Yeah, of course," he offers a smile. "Thanks for playing with me."

"Anything for my best friend~" Clay grins. "Love you, George! See you tomorrow, okay?"

And before George can respond to his surprising string of phrases, Clay is gone. In his place sits the smiley face doll. George huffs and turns away, his ears turning pink.

"Love you too, you idiot," he whispers.



"Hey George, are you okay?"

"Hm?" George yawns. "Yeah, I'm fine. What is it?"

"You've been yawning ever since you joined the teamspeak," Sapnap answers, sounding worried. "Did you pull an all-nighter or something?"

George thinks back to his night with Clay, and he smiles a little. "Hm... maybe." He'd gotten about four to five hours of sleep after his recording session with Clay, so he's overall not doing too bad.

Sapnap seems to disagree, though. "Dude, what were you even doing?"

"Recording a video." Technically not a lie.

"Yeah, but don't do youtube at the expense of your health," his friend continues. "You really need to sleep more. You sound awful."

"Thanks," George frowns. "I'll keep that in mind." He doesn't promise he'll sleep more though. Sure, he'll try to keep a balance of normal nights and Clay nights, but having the Clay nights was non-negotiable.

His friend sounds unsatisfied with George's reply. "Guess that dream doll isn't working so good, after all."

"Oh believe me," George smiles, remembering every good night's sleep he's had with Clay by his side, "it's working, alright."



“I don’t think I’ll play minecraft tonight.”

“Hm?” George yawns, pausing halfway to his bed. “Why not?”

Clay hums in thought. “It’s more fun playing with you,” he eventually answers.

George feels his face start to flush. “You—”

“It’s funny when you scream.”

As quickly as it appeared, the flush disappeared. “You’re so annoying,” George groans.

Clay gives a little wheeze. George doesn’t want to admit it, but he’s grown to like Clay’s laugh. It’s very distinctive to him. “I’ll just browse around online. Who knows? Maybe I’ll find something interesting and a pin will fall off.”

“Knowing you, it just might.”

Clay chuckles. “I can borrow your headphones, yeah?”

“Whatever, go ahead,” he answers, then tries to copy Clay’s voice: *“My home is your home, my stuff is your stuff.”*

Clay wheezes a little again, to George’s satisfaction. “Thanks Gogy~ Have a good night!”

George mumbles in pretend-aggravation, sinking into his bed. Luca appears at the edge of his vision, eventually settling next to his shoulder. “You’re not going to stay with Clay this time?” George whispers teasingly. His cat purrs into his ear. “Alright,” he giggles, letting his eyelids close, “You can stay.”

*“Clay, stop,” George laughs.*

*Clay doesn’t stop though. He keeps nuzzling into George’s neck. “What if I don’t want to?”*

*George smiles, looking into Clay’s blue eyes. “God, you’re so annoying, you know that?”*

*“But you still love me~”*

*“Yeah,” he sighs, kissing the top of his friend’s forehead, “Yeah, I do.”*

When George wakes up from his cat nudging into his neck, he knows that he had a good dream again. But as usual, he doesn’t remember what it was about. George gets up and, out of curiosity, checks Clay’s computer to see what his friend was up to. He finds several tabs open with songs by some artist named Melanie and youtube videos of football games. There is, however, no extra pin to be seen.



## Chapter End Notes

I guess now we can say we definitely know the Dream Doll is working :D  
Someone please make it a real product though, lmfao

Fanart for the story:

♥ [Waiting](#) by Gumball

# Golden Sun

## Chapter Summary

George is staring. He can't help it. In the moonlight, Clay appears... ethereal. His skin glints brightly, and his features appear more defined because of the contrast of light and shadows in the night.

*Thump thump*, goes George's heart.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Hey dude, I saw your new video! Who was the new guy?”

“Hm?” George looks over his shoulder, seeing the doll propped up on his bed. He wonders if Clay is awake right now, hearing this discussion. “Oh, just a friend.”

“No way,” Sapnap laughs. “*Just* a friend? How come I’ve never heard of him before? You guys talked like you’ve known each other for *years*.”

“And he plays minecraft like a *muffin*!” Bad adds. “What kind of person would *voluntarily* attack a *zombie pigman*?!”

“Yeah, he plays like an idiot,” George grins.

“Seriously, who is he?” Sapnap asks again. “I read over the comments, and it seems like it’s the first time he’s shown up on your channel.”

“His name is Clay,” George answers, preparing to use his pre-planned lie, “And uh, we just met online and I thought he was a pretty cool dude, so. We played minecraft together and made a video.”

“Does he have a youtube channel?” Bad asks.

“No.”

“He should seriously consider making one,” Sapnap whistles. “Like, sure, his playstyle is super reckless, but I think he’d do well on the platform!”

“He’s still a muffin,” Bad repeats. “Tell him I think he’s a muffin!”

“Yo George, can you tell me his social media? I wanna follow him! You didn’t put any links about him in the description.”

“Oh, um,” George fumbles, “he didn’t tell me what social media he has.”

“Um... what?”

“Really?” Sapnap sounds as confused as Bad. “Why didn’t you ask him?”

"I dunno... I just didn't feel like it."

"Well, then ask him! And then tell us!"

"Okay, okay!" George laughs sheepishly. "I... I'll ask. I can't promise any answers though."

"And invite him to play with us sometime!"

"Yeah! We can teach the muffin how to *actually* play minecraft correctly."

Fondness grows inside George at the thoughtfulness of his friends. "I'll ask if he's interested," he promises.



"We're not playing minecraft?"

"Not today," George answers. "I think you've been spending too much time on the computer. And we haven't been making any progress on your curse either."

"Okay, so... what's the plan?"

George throws Clay a pair of (brand-new) swim trunks. "Go put that on."

Clay doesn't respond for a good second, as if registering George's demand. "Wait... are we going *swimming*?"

"Maybe," George replies elusively, pushing Clay to the bathroom. "Just go put them on!"

A minute later, Clay stumbles out of the bathroom with his new swimming trunks. "Is blue your favorite color or something?" Clay asks him, referring to the trunks.

"It's like, one of the only colors I can see," is George's answer. He too is already in swim trunks, so he just grabs the picnic basket and they're ready to go. "We're leaving now! Follow me."

George leads them to his car and, after throwing the basket in the backseat, he takes the position of the driver.

"This is so weird," Clay remarks, taking the passenger seat. "In Florida, the driver's seat is on the left."

"*Americans* are the weird ones," George retorts, turning his car out into the street, "You guys use fahrenheit, for goodness sake."

Clay gives a short wheeze. "And what, may I ask, is so bad about fahrenheit?"

"Nothing. It's just a weird system used by you weird americans."

Clay chuckles at that. "Well, I think you people who use *celsius* are the weird ones."

The conversation goes on like this for a while, a lot like the rehash of George's conversation with Sappnap. It eventually changes into friendly banter though, then into Clay asking questions about where they're headed.

"What's in the picnic basket?"

“You’ll find out when we get there,” George replies for what’s possibly the hundredth time. “Just wait, okay?” He can’t help feeling a bit jittery. He’s secretly hoping Clay will like what he prepared.

“How much farther is it? You’ve been driving for nearly twenty minutes.”

“It’s literally just one more minute.”

Then finally, they’re here. George parks the car and grabs the basket, leading Clay to the edge of the marina. George has never been here at night before, so he’s surprised at how serene and peaceful everything looks. The moon is only half-full, but it’s still enough to light up the water ahead of them.

“I knew it, it’s the beach!” Clay had exclaimed upon seeing the waves. He wastes no time at all to jump the railing and go running over the pebbly shore, much to George’s amusement.

“You’re such a kid!” George calls out after him, rolling his eyes. He’s embarrassed to admit that he struggled across the railing with slightly less grace, but he’ll just blame his inadequacy on the giant basket in his arms.

“Psh, am not!” Clay was running back now. “I bet I’m older than you.”

“Oh yeah? I’m 23.”

Clay pauses. “Well, crap, I’m 21.”

George doubles over in laughter. “Oh my god, you actually *are* a kid then!”

Clay playfully hits George’s shoulder, his lips twitching into a smile. “God, just, shut up. Can I see what’s inside the basket now?”

Oh right. George had almost forgotten. “Yeah, yeah.” He sets the basket down and reaches in to grab a wrapped triangle sandwich. “Here you go. May your curiosity be satiated.”

Clay sits down next to George, accepting the gift. “Aww George,” he coos, mouth stretching into a thankful smile, “did you make these yourself?”

George grabs another sandwich. “Mmm, maybe.” For some reason, Clay’s attention on him is making him flustered. “I forgot to ask, but you’re not allergic to anything, right?”

“No, I’m not.”

George lets out a breath of relief. “Okay, good. This would’ve been a pretty shitty plan if you were secretly gluten free like Bad.”

Clay snickers. “I didn’t take you for a chef. What’s the special occasion?”

“There isn’t one,” George replies honestly, staring at the moon. “Just wanted to do something nice for you.”

Clay goes silent at that. The two talk quietly, staring at the waves as they break on the beach and munching sandwiches until they’re all gone. Things had gone well. And George knew he had made Clay put on trunks, but at that moment, he had honestly been ready to call it a night.

But of course, Clay gave no intention of following George’s train of thought. “Hey George, let’s go in the water!”

“Maybe we shouldn’t...”

“Aww c‘mon, *George!*” Already, Clay is untying his shoes. “This was your idea, wasn’t it?”

“Well, now I’m having second thoughts,” George huffs. “That water looks freezing.”

Clay grabs his hand, and for a split moment, George is so surprised that he doesn’t stop Clay from dragging him over to where the waves meet the shore.

“Look, see?” Clay demonstrates placing his bare feet into the water. “I’m fine! It’s not that bad.”

Hm... well, standing next to Clay in the water didn’t sound so bad. “I guess...”

“Go, take off your shoes and join me!”

George obediently follows Clay’s demands and soon enough, he’s back at his friend’s side.

“God, what the hell, Clay! You said the water wasn’t cold!”

“I did *not* say that,” Clay defends himself, laughing at George’s expression, “I just said it’s not that bad.”

“Well, you lied, because this *is* that bad.” George can’t help shivering a bit, hopping around in the water to ease himself into the cold. It feels like his toes are freezing.

Clay snickers at George’s little dance. “I bet I can go in deeper than you.”

“Clay, *don’t*.”

It’s too late though, since Clay is already tugging off his hoodie. He throws it onto the pebbles, then takes his shirt off too. George is staring. He can’t help it. For a gaming junkie, his friend is more toned and muscular than he thought. In the moonlight, Clay appears... ethereal. His skin glints brightly, and his features appear more defined because of the contrast of light and shadows in the night.

*Thump thump*, goes George’s heart.

Clay’s entire lower half is already in the water. “Come *on*, George!” He splashes the water in George’s direction, and a few specks land on him.

“Oh my god. Seriously, *stop!* You’re going to get my clothes wet!”

“Then take them off!”

George hesitates, but eventually, he obliges and throws off his jacket and shirt too. He’s a little self-conscious of how he looks next to Clay though, so he tries to mask his discomfort by stepping deeper into the water. He shivers with every step that the pitch-black water climbs higher. By the time he’s standing next to Clay, the water has already reached his upper waist.

“Oh my god, wait,” George laughs in realization, “You’re taller than me! That’s unfair!”

“All’s fair in love and war!” Clay grins, and before George even knows what’s happening, he’s been completely doused in a wave of water.

“*C-Clay!*” George sputters, wiping the water out of his eyes. He can hear Clay wheezing somewhere nearby, so he blindly creates a splash in that direction. When his friend’s laughter turns

into shouting, George knows he's hit his mark. "Take that!" He shouts triumphantly.

"Oooh," a devilish smirk appears on Clay's face, "you're *on*."

The two then begin to have a water battle. There's a lot of splashing, laughing, pleading, and running away. Upsettingly, George ends up doing most of the running away. He had definitely underestimated Clay. His friend was *way* too over-competitive. George realized too late into the battle that he had no chance of winning.

"This is so *unfair*. You're wearing a goddamn *mask*, that's cheating!"

"*Oh George~* Come here to play!" Clay cackles, showing no mercy to his frantically fleeing friend. He eventually manages to tackle George from behind, preventing him from getting away. "I've got you now!"

"Ack— Clay, *stop*, get *off* of me!"

He can hear Clay giggle next to his ear. "No way. And hey, you're not cold anymore, right?"

Oh. George realizes with a startle that Clay was right — he had forgotten how cold the water was once they started fighting. "Yeah, but no thanks to you," he replies, splashing another wave onto Clay's mask. His friend giggles gleefully, falling off of George's back.

"You're welcome, Gogy~"

George blinks when he sees a brief flash of the back of Clay's head. "Uh... Clay?"

"Hm?" Clay prompts. His hair is wet and dripping, and his torso looks so smooth, shiny from the water...

*Thump thump.*

George shakes his head to dispel his thoughts. "Um, I think... you're missing a pin?"

Clay looks at George in surprise, then uses one of his hands to feel the back of his head. "Two, three, four, five... oh my god, George!" A smile splits across his face. "I did lose one!"

George takes a step back, holding up his hands in warning. "I swear, do *not* pounce on me—"

Of course, Clay pounces on George and he nearly falls over from the weight of his friend. "I lost another pin, George!" Clay wraps him into a bear hug, "We're actually halfway to breaking the curse!"

"Yeah yeah, you big doofus. Get off of me."

His friend chuckles, leaning next to George's ear, "What if I don't want to?"

George freezes. Where had he heard that before? "You're *so* annoying," he eventually says, shrugging Clay off and walking back to the shore. "Your pin fell off, so I guess that means my work for today is done."

"Aw, you don't wanna play more?"

George collapses next to the picnic blanket, digging out the towels he had prepared. "Not if it means fighting against *you*. You're a *menace*, Clay."



His friend chuckles. “So that means I win?”

“Whatever floats your boat, dude.”

His friend gives a gentle wheeze and plops down next to George. “Whatta sore loser,” he jokes. George decides not to give him the benefit of a response, so he just hands Clay the other towel.

*What color are your eyes?* The question is at the tip of his tongue. He almost asks it, but... “Do you like sunrises?” is what George asks instead.

“Not really, no. Why?”

“Was hoping we could get two pins in one night,” George jokes, bumping Clay’s shoulder with his. “Oh well.”

“Are we gonna watch the sun come up?” Clay asks while tugging his shirt back on.

“Dunno,” George admits. The sky does look a shade different, kind of more grey, but he’s not sure if it’s a sunrise-color or something else. “Why don’t you like it?” He asks out of curiosity. He doesn’t care much for them because of his color-blindness, but what would Clay’s reasoning be?

Clay pulls up his legs and buries his chin in his arms. He looks... different without his hoodie on. George doesn’t know if it’s a weird or good difference though.

“It’s just... a shitty reminder.”

George is confused for a moment, but then he gets it. “Oh.” To most people, sunrise indicated the end of a long night, and the start of a new day. But for Clay, it was only a reminder that he would become a doll again. It was a symbol for the trapped feeling of his curse. He moves to get up, “Maybe we should leave then—”

“No.” George pauses, surprised to feel Clay tugging at his sleeve. “No, um, we can stay here.”

“But, the sunrise...”

“It’s okay,” Clay gives him a small, reassuring smile. He seems... shy? “I want to stay.”

“Oh.” George slowly sits back down. “Um, are you sure?”

“Yeah,” Clay nods, turning back to the horizon. “I want to watch it with you.”

*Thump thump.*

“O-okay.”

So they sit there, side-by-side, shoulders touching. They watch as the grey sky turns brown, and ever so slowly, the yellow sun climbs out of the ground and turns the ocean into a dazzling gold. George is surprised at himself. Even with his colorblindness, it still looks beautiful. He wonders how much better it’d look to someone who *could* see full color.

George doesn’t know what time it is, but he’s pretty sure Clay’s time is almost up. He looks over at Clay, whose face is still trained at the horizon. The sun is casting a warm glow on the mask, so that Clay looks like he’s glowing.

“It really is beautiful,” Clay says, a little bitterly.

“Yeah,” George echoes, looking at Clay, “Beautiful.”

He blinks once, and Clay is gone. George sighs at the sight of the doll, but he stays to watch the rest of the sunrise with Clay, like he wanted.



## Chapter End Notes

Getting "You Can't Love Me Back" vibes from this one -3- so nice~

# Rain In His Eyes

## Chapter Summary

George pauses, actually taking in the sight of Clay before him. His friend is panting from having run so much. His hoodie is an entire shade darker, his wet hair stuck messily to the front of his mask. George can't help the happy bubble that bursts inside him, so he laughs.

"Hm? What's so funny?"

"Your mask," George smiles, using his thumb to wipe underneath the smiley's pencil-dot eyes, "it looks like it's crying."

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"George. *George!*"

"Whu-whut...?"

George blinks to himself a couple times to remember where he's at. Oh yeah. Sapnap is livestreaming, and Bad had joined him on his server. George decided to just stay on the teamspeak, knowing he'd likely fall asleep during. And his guess had been right.

"You were asleep, George," Bad explains helpfully.

"Was not," George denies.

"George, *don't tell me* you've been staying up all night again."

"Again?" Bad prompts curiously. "This isn't the first time?"

"I," George yawns, "Did *not*. I got... some sleep." Truthfully, it was definitely less than usual. He had, after all, stayed longer to watch the sunrise with Clay, and then had to drive himself back home and take a shower. Still, totally worth it though, if it's to make Clay happy.

Hm, wait a second. That was a weird thought George just had. He blinks wearily at himself, trying to remember what his brain just said. But... eh, he's too tired to think about it.

"Yeah, two days ago he was acting like this too," Sapnap explains to Bad. "Today is a lot worse though, he can't even stay awake."

"Shut up," George mumbles, burrowing into his folded arms.

"I wonder if it has something to do with that guy in his most recent video," Bad jokes.

George freezes. Oh. Shit. That exactly hit the mark. What should he say to that??

Unfortunately, saying nothing seemed to be the wrong choice. Sapnap catches on almost immediately, replying with a teasing "*oooooh*, George~ Does it have something to do with him?"

“God, it’s...” he huffs, his mind too tired to come up with a snarky response. “It’s none of your business.”

“Oh my god,” Sapnap laughs, clearly getting a kick out of George’s responses, “it does have something to do with him, doesn’t it?! Holy shi—”

“LANGUAGE.”

“Whatever,” Sapnap dismisses, his attention refusing to stray from the topic, much to George’s annoyance. “Seriously dude, what is it? Were you two recording another video or something?”

“Yeah, something like that,” George lies.

“Is he making you record with him only at night?” Bad questions, “Why don’t you muffins record *before* nighttime?”

“It’s not his fault,” George finds himself defending Clay, “I... I choose to. Record at night. Because, you know, I have a bad sleep schedule and stuff. He’s the one who has to put up with me.”

“Dude, you need to...” Sapnap sighs. “I don’t know, tell him you need sleep, that you’ll record with him later. You have to stop putting youtube in front of your health.”

“I’ll try,” George sighs, knowing full well there wasn’t anything to *try* about it. “I’ll try.”



“Go to bed,” is the first thing Clay says when he appears.

George blinks, not sure if he’s heard correctly. “What?”

“Get in the bed!” Clay repeats, gently pushing George’s shoulders to make him sit on the mattress. “I heard your talk with your friends earlier, and you clearly need to listen to them.”

George laughs. “Aw, are you caring about me Clay?”

“I do feel a bit guilty,” Clay answers with an honest frown, “I mean, it *is* because of me that you’re barely getting any sleep.”

“I’m fine, Clay.” George brushes it off, moving to stand, “I was a bit tired then, but I took a quick nap, so I’m okay now—”

“No.” Clay pushes George back down again. “You’re not wiggling your way out of this. Go to bed, George.”

“But I need to—”

“You don’t *need* to do anything, George.” Clay sounds exasperated. “You don’t need to feed me, I see those sun chips you bought. Which are my favorite, by the way, so thanks. And I have my own computer now, so you don’t need to set anything up. I’m fine. Go to bed.”

George can’t help it, but he softens at the look of Clay’s concerned lip pout. “A-alright,” he concedes. Clay gives a satisfied smile, and finally leaves George’s bedside.

George rolls into his blankets, closing his eyes to try to sleep like Clay had instructed. But for some reason, he just isn’t tired. Something is nagging at his mind, but George isn’t quite sure what it is.

Something felt *weird*, ever since the beach night. Like something unspoken was hanging in the air. But, it was probably just George imagining things.

After staring at the smiley face pins on the back of Clay's head for about a minute, George speaks up. "Hey, Clay?"

His friend looks over his shoulder. "What is it, George?"

"Why didn't you run away from the old lady's shop? You said you were there for a while, right?"

Clay gives a cute little wheeze. "George, don't tell me you want a bedtime story?"

"...what if I say yes?"

Clay chuckles, and to George's surprise, actually walks over and sits on the edge of his bed. "I've told you before, that I don't have to transform into a human if I don't want to?"

George nods. "So, why didn't you change into a person and run away?"

Clay sighs. "I'd... already done so much running, George. For nearly a whole year, all I did was search, looking for *the meaning of life*." He puts those words in quotation marks. "And as a human, I feel hunger. I feel thirst. I feel cold. It's miserable being a person, you know? At least, as a doll, I don't feel those effects. I'm actually indestructible, in my doll form. I can never break, or tear, or come apart."

"N-never?"

"Yeah," Clay shrugs. "Came with the curse, I guess. And after searching night after night, with only the stars to accompany me, I came to realize it was hopeless. I couldn't do anything on my own. So I just... stopped becoming human. I just stayed as a doll."

"You... couldn't ask anyone for help?"

"With a face like this?" Clay laughs bitterly, pointing to his mask. "Tough luck. You were right, you know? I look like a serial killer. Anyone that sees me in the dead of night would assume so. I could never get a word in without people running away. Getting help from others just wasn't an option."

"But, I'm an option?"

"Yes," Clay smiles a little, with a hint of... fondness? "But you were a special case. What kind of adult would buy a doll like me? I'm clearly a toy meant for little kids. I'd seriously considered waiting for a child to just... find me, pick me up, and bring me back home, but," a sigh, "I realized there was no way I could transform back without freaking them out."

"But uh, I *was* eventually picked up. But I was asleep during, so I didn't see who it was. When I woke up, I was in a dark place. Looking at the light coming in through cracks in the ceiling, I guessed I was in a cardboard box or something. There was a lot of humming and loud engine noises around me, so I thought I was in some sort of vehicle."

"An airplane," George supplies.

"Yep. I tried to stay awake and catch a glimpse of who it was that found me, but I grew tired of waiting." Clay laughs at himself. "When I woke up again, I was sitting on a desk, hiding among dozens of random items. It took me a while, but I eventually figured out I was in an antique shop. I

could listen to customers when they entered, and when I heard their accents, I realized I had crossed an entire ocean.”

“Weren’t you afraid?” George asks quietly. He knew if it were him, he would’ve been panicked to death.

“What was there to be afraid of?” Clay replies, so nonchalantly that George can’t help but feel bad for him. “I’d... honestly felt safer there than ever. For once, I wouldn’t be sitting outside, desperately hoping no one would see me and decide to steal me home on a whim. For once, I could sit still and relax with a roof over my head. I didn’t have to do a thing. It was now someone else’s job to come and buy me. Plus,” Clay snickers, “that lady almost never leaves her shop. If I turned into a human in front of her, I think I would’ve given her a heart attack.”

George snickers with Clay. “So, when me and Sapnap came...?”

“I wasn’t sure what to feel,” Clay replies honestly, drumming his fingers on his leg. “I was kind of annoyed at first. I’d just gotten so used to sitting in that shop, you know? Sure, I missed doing things as a person, but the cons that came with it just made the whole option unappealing. Plus, most customers would never notice me, buried behind so much junk. At some point, I had just accepted my situation. I’d been prepared to sit there forever. So when you noticed me...” Clay gives a sheepish smile, “I think I might’ve panicked a little bit.”

George smiles back. “Really?”

“It didn’t help that you called me *creepy*,” Clay adds, giving him an unamused look. “The moment you said that, I figured the chances of you being calm when seeing my mask wouldn’t be loads better. At the moment, I wanted *your friend* to be the one that bought me. And I only became more resentful, when I learned he came from the US. I couldn’t help thinking: *he could’ve been my ticket out of there.*”

George gulps, and sits up. “Y-you’re right.” An upset feeling is wriggling in the bottom of his stomach. There are bees... bees stinging him. “If Sapnap was the one...”

“George,” Clay laughs. “I don’t care.”

George blinks. “What do you *mean*, you don’t care? Sapnap could’ve taken you back to the US! He could’ve... been the one to help you with your curse, and—”

“George, I’m *glad* you’re the one that bought me. I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

George stares. He can feel a flush crawling up his cheeks, but he can’t stop it. “R-really?”

“Yes, really,” Clay smiles. “You’re like, a complete idiot, but you’re the nicest idiot I’ve ever met. I’m glad that, out of anyone who could’ve bought me, it was you.”

George can’t keep back his smile. God, he feels so... *warm* inside, hearing that. From *Clay*, of all people. The dumbest, lamest loser ever. Someone who he’s only known for a week. But nonetheless, a someone that’s become one of the most important people in his life.

Clay looks like he wants to say something more, but he just shakes his head. “Storytime’s over! Now go to bed.”

“M-hm,” George nods. He doesn’t trust himself to speak right now. Clay gets up and returns to his chair. The bed feels empty without Clay sitting there, but Luca appears out of nowhere, and George figures that’s the best replacement he’s going to get.

*“You’re so cute, George.”*

*George giggles, sinking into Clay’s lap. “Look who’s talking.”*

*Clay makes that wheeze that George loves so much. “Aww is my Georgie complimenting me?~”*

*“My god,” George smiles, leaning into his friend, “you’re such an idiot, you know that?”*

*“Yeah,” Clay smirks, propping his chin on George’s shoulder, “but I’m your idiot.”*



“George, another pin fell off!”

“What?” George nearly falls off his chair from surprise. He hadn’t realized it was midnight already. “Since when??”

“I was holding onto it when I transformed yesterday,” Clay explains, proudly holding up another pin, “so it disappeared with me when I became a doll. I wanted to show you right away, but you were sleeping.”

“Oh. Well, nice! Why did it fall off?”

“I was thinking about that video we recorded a couple days ago,” Clay explains, stepping over to his computer. “So yesterday, I spent the whole night watching youtube videos to figure out how to code. And then I logged onto my minecraft and, using your plug-ins as an example, I coded a couple of my own plug-in ideas.”

A moment of silence. George slowly tilts his head. “Your pin fell off because of... coding minecraft plug-ins?”

“I guess so!” Clay replies brightly.

“How is that not cheating?” George finds himself laughing. Clay is just *so ridiculous* sometimes. “You lost a pin because of minecraft, *twice*.”

“No,” Clay huffs, arms crossed, “It’s *different*.”

“Whatever you say,” George chuckles. “At least you only have four pins left! You’re so close!”

“Oh... um, yeah, I guess so.”

That’s... not the reaction George expected. He thought Clay would be more excited about an achievement like this. He’s about to bring it up, but he doesn’t get the chance to because Clay has turned to the window. There’s a pitter-pattering sound outside.

“Is that rain I hear?” George says instead.

A mischievous grin appears on Clay’s face. Oh no. “Hey George...”

“No.”

Clay wheezes. “George! I didn’t even *say* anything yet!”

“I don’t *need* to know what you’re going to say to know you’re up to no good.”

“Aw c’mon!” Clay laughs, “Let’s go out in the rain!”

“No,” George gives an exasperated sigh. Sometimes Clay was such a *kid*. “You’re going to catch a cold if you do that.”

Clay snorts. “What are you, my *mom*? ”

“Your friend that cares about your well-being,” George corrects factually.

A smile plays on Clay’s lips. “It’s not like you can stop me, you know?”

“What?” But George takes too long to register the words, and before he knows it, Clay has already dashed out of the room. “What! *Clay!* ”

He chases after his friend, but the front door is already wide open. *Godammit*. George quickly tugs on his shoes and, after grabbing his umbrella, steps out into the night. He can hear Clay’s laughter from a mile away, so he follows the source of the sound, finally spotting him a few meters away down the street.

“*Clay, what the fuck!*”

His idiotic friend keeps laughing, his hands pointed towards the sky. “*George, this feels amazing!* Put away the umbrella!”

“No,” George grumbles, stalking over to his friend. Clay stays just out of grabbing distance though, wheezing every time George fails to catch him. “Get under the umbrella! You’re going to get soaked!”

“But that’s what makes it fun~” Clay sings, skipping through the puddles.

“You’re an idiot,” George sighs. In his race to catch Clay, he had accidentally gotten a few raindrops on his legs. As his attention is turned away, the umbrella disappears from his hand. George’s head snaps up. “*Clay!* Give it back!”

“Then come and get it~” His stupid idiot of a friend teases. George makes a leap for it, but Clay is more agile than he is, so he easily twists away.

The next ten minutes consists of him chasing Clay around in circles, and failing miserably at it. By the time he’s caught Clay (and even then, Clay had obviously been going easy on him), he was already soaked head to toe.

“Now look what you’ve done,” George complains, trying to stare his friend down. He must not look very intimidating though, because Clay snickers.

“It’s refreshing though, isn’t it?”

George pauses, actually taking in the sight of Clay before him. His friend is panting from having run so much. His hoodie is an entire shade darker, his wet hair stuck messily to the front of his mask. George can’t help the happy bubble that bursts inside him, so he laughs.

“Hm?” Clay tilts his head, “What’s so funny?”

“Your mask,” George smiles, using his thumb to wipe underneath the smiley’s pencil-dot eyes, “it looks like it’s crying.”

Clay gives an amused huff. His mouth opens, then pauses, then closes again. “I guess it’s time we



should head back, huh?”

George’s mouth falls open. “What. *Now* you say that? *After* I’ve been completely soaked?”

“I’m soaked too,” Clay offers cheekily.

“Yeah, but this was *your* stupid idea. At least I brought an umbrella!”

“A lot of good that did for you,” Clay snickers.

“And whose fault is *that*? ”

The two bicker like this all way back. No one opens the umbrella, because at this point, they both knew it would’ve been pointless to use it. When they get back, George claims the shower first (“Because I was *dragged* into this, Clay, at the very least I should get first-shower privileges”). When he’s finished, George lets Clay borrow a few of his clothes, and on the spur-of-the-moment, he decides to make two cups of hot chocolate for them.

As he’s putting away the folded umbrella, an object slides out from inside of it. It’s a smiley face pin. George blinks at it, then picks it up with a smile. Another one down.

Soon after, Clay’s out of the shower. “George, one of my pins...!”

George holds up his find. “Yep, I already know.”

They’re grinning at each other like idiots, but George finds that he could care less. He tells Clay to sit on the couch, and he brings over the two mugs of steaming hot chocolate. They spend the next hour laughing over their antics, sipping the sweet drink, yelling when it burns their tongue. It makes George’s insides all fuzzy and warm. Clay is a fucking idiot sometimes, but he still loves him in all his dorkiness.

*He... loves him?*

George doesn’t realize when he does, but the night catches up to him, and he eventually falls asleep mid-conversation. When he wakes up, there’s a blanket covering him, and a smiley doll sitting on the cushion next to him.



## Chapter End Notes

There's a "Bees and Butterflies" series reference in here, haha... did you catch it? I'll be making even more references in the next chapters... ^^

Absolutely fantastic fanart for this chapter~:

♥ lady\_pomegranate: [Rain scene](#)

## Warm Hugs

### Chapter Notes

This one's in Clay's POV~ And it was really fun to write, so I hope you like it!  
(I'm also considering making a side-story where all the events in The Dream Doll are told in Dream's POV, so tell me if that sounds like something you'd like to read ^^)

“Clay! God, *please* ... *Clay! This isn't funny!*”

Clay stirs. Someone is shouting for him, really loudly. It's honestly annoying. Would they stop if he told them to quit it? The fog eases from his mind, and he finally slips out of sleep, looking through the eyes of the doll:

In front of him is George, but he looks... panicked. His eyes are wide with fear, his features tense with worry. “Clay!” He shouts again. “*Clay, please...*”

*Huh?* Clay snaps awake. *George?* What was wrong with him? Why does he sound like that? Magic tickles Clay's brain. Suddenly, he jumps out of the doll in full human form, landing messily on the bed due to his haste. “George!”

George gasps, so loudly that Clay thinks he's seen the fucking messiah or something. “Oh my *god*. *CLAY! WHAT THE FUCK.*”

“Wha—” But Clay doesn't get a chance to get a word in.

“GOD, you're... you're UNBELIEVABLE. I sat here waiting *two hours* for you to transform, I—I thought you *DIED* or something, I have no clue how your magic works so I thought there might've been some factor I didn't know about yet because you hadn't told me, I-like how people become werewolves on the full moon or some shit like that, and I got *so fucking worried*, but I was *completely helpless*, I couldn't do *anything*. All I could do was *wait* for you, Clay, you— you...”

“George, I'm fine!” Clay blinks, putting his hands on his friend's shoulders. “I... I just, spent a lot of today awake, is all,” *watching George*, his brain adds unhelpfully, “so I was really sleepy. I hadn't realized it was already midnight.”

George's lower lip is trembling. He looks to be on the verge of tears. “WHY. This has never happened before! How the *fuck* was I supposed to know you were just *sleeping* ?!”

Clay notices Luca, crouched to the side of the bed, ears pressed up against his head. Even the *cat* looked surprised at George's outburst. “George, I need you to calm down. I'm right here, okay? I'm fine. You're fine.”

George takes a shuddering breath. “God, Clay, I was *so* worried. I thought you were *gone*. I seriously started to think, that maybe... maybe I just *imagined* everything that happened this past week, that is was all just some *crazy hallucination* my brain came up with so I could cope with my temporary sense of loneliness. I thought... I thought I *made you up*.”

Clay doesn't know what to say to that. He hates seeing George like this. It makes his heart twist with pain and sympathy. “George...” he whispers.

“Don’t *ever* do that again, Clay. *Please*, promise me you won’t do that again.”

Clay swallows and nods. “I-I promise.”

“Good.” George seems to relax at that, but he’s clearly still shaken. Clay feels bad. He hadn’t meant to make George worry. He knows how much he means to George, so he would’ve definitely avoided hurting him if he could.

*You’re such a liar. You already know you’re going to hurt him, but you refuse to accept it.*

Even still, Clay hesitantly offers his arms. “Come here.”

Without any resistance, George has climbed into his embrace. It confirms Clay’s worries: George is shaking. He’s still upset, and rightfully so. But he’s not upset at *Clay*, because that’s just the kind of person George is. He’s too kind for his own good.

Clay rubs circles into his friend’s back, trying to help him calm down. He can hear George’s heartbeat from here — it’s going a mile a minute. But after a few minutes of holding him, the heartbeat slows to a quiet beat, so that Clay can’t hear it anymore. George’s breathing has also steadied to a slower rhythm.

Clay peers at George’s face, and realizes his friend has fallen asleep. He smiles a little, unable to help the fond bubble that grows inside his chest. George must’ve been sick with worry waiting for Clay, and now that his worries were resolved, he was without a doubt exhausted. Clay can’t blame him. He thinks he’d go crazy too, if George suddenly disappeared from his life.

Because George was amazing. When no one else listened to Clay, when everybody else ran away from his mask, George didn’t. He stood his ground, and he listened to Clay. And he not only listened, but wanted to help too. Wanted to help Clay, who was nothing more than a stranger. George was too kind for his own good.

Clay was glad he had failed to run away. When midnight struck on his second day here, his original plan had been to sneak out without George noticing. He thought it would’ve been better that way, for the both of them. But he hadn’t expected the guy to still be awake, nor that his transformation would make such a loud noise. Either way, he supposes he should be grateful. It’s only *because* of those things that he was convinced into staying. And it’s because of those things that he was able to appreciate his last moments before going away.

Clay suddenly hears a *pop*. He startles at the sight of the pin, lying on top of the sheets. *What the fuck?*

*Why was a pin falling off now?*

Suddenly, Clay remembers the position they’re in. George’s head is nestled in the crook of Clay’s collarbone, his arms wrapped around Clay’s torso. Clay’s arms are also circled around George, like a safety net. (George’s smaller size meant he could fit perfectly in Clay’s arms.) It was warm, but not uncomfortable. They were, in a strange but undeniable way, definitely cuddling.

*So I think cuddling makes life worth living for?* Clay thinks to himself, suspiciously eyeing the pin. He didn’t take himself for the affectionate type, but this pin was clearly saying otherwise. After a moment of consideration, Clay takes the pin and stuffs it into his hoodie pocket. He’d really rather George *not* know about this. It’d just make things confusing.

He’ll just tell him about it later.



“We’re gonna watch movies.”

Clay knows better than to ask why. Doing anything else would take more energy than George had to offer, and his friend was clearly exhausted. Skipping nights of sleep for Clay was definitely taking a toll on him. And their little episode yesterday had no doubt left him mentally drained. Clay had made extra sure to be on time today when transforming.

“What’re we watching?”

“Haven’t decided yet,” George mumbles, joining Clay on the bed. They were planning on watching from a laptop, because George didn’t own a TV. “Do you remember if you’ve seen any good movies?”

Clay tries to rack his brain, but as usual, there’s a fog preventing him from recalling anything. “Nope.”

“Do you have any preferences?”

“Well, if I had to say... No horror, please.”

George ends up picking a random movie from his list (*The Dark Knight Rises*) before propping the computer on his lap. Clay realizes a few minutes in that George isn’t watching the movie. His mind appears to be elsewhere, and he occasionally opens his phone to send texts to a friend. Probably Sapnap.

Clay is admittedly a little jealous. George and Sapnap have probably known each other for years. Whatever connection they had was something Clay could never have with George, because his curse would never allow it. It sucked, but it was just how it was.

“You talking to Sapnap?”

“Yup,” George confirms. “He’s trying to convince me to go to bed.”

“Hmm,” Clay hums. “He’s a good friend, isn’t he?”

“Yeah,” George replies, “We’ve known each other for ages.” Clay waits for George to fall into the trap, say *Sapnap and I are best friends*. It doesn’t come, though. “What? You jealous?”

Ouch. That hit too close to home. “Psh, you wish,” Clay smiles, hiding the flash of hurt he had just felt.

Clay watches in amusement as George gets flustered from his reply. Yes, he knew George had a crush on him. Even though George didn’t seem to know it himself, at times. Clay figured it out, when he heard George talk in his sleep. It was an interesting experience, listening to someone dream about you. And it was also a valuable nugget of information for knowing how to turn his best friend pink.

“You’re an idiot,” George says.

*Yeah, but I’m your idiot.* The words are on the tip of his tongue. It’d be fun to mess with his friend. But after some debating, Clay decides not to say anything.

As George continues to tap away on his phone, Clay watches. It’s one of the many pluses of

wearing a magical see-through mask — it's so light that Clay often forgets it's there, and he can watch people out of the corner of his eye without the person noticing.

Clay knows George is self-conscious of his body based on the way he acted at the beach, but personally, Clay thinks George is perfect. He might not be muscular or tall, but he's still attractive. He has a nice body shape. It's a shame that he can't see that in himself.

"Sapnap wants me to tell you he says 'hi'. Also that you should—" George pauses. "...hng..."

"That I should what?"

"...Nevermind." George's face is visibly pinker, which only makes Clay more interested to know.

"Geooooorge... tell me!"

George appears hesitant, but continues, "That... you should stop keeping me up all night."

Clay looks over George's shoulder to see the message for himself. "What's so bad about tha—? *Ohhh*." Clay wheezes loudly, slapping his thigh. "There's a *lenny face* attached to the end! You're supposed to emote that too, when giving the verbal message."

"There's *no* way I'm doing that," his friend huffs.

Clay snickers. "Tell your friend that I can't give any promises."

"Fine."

"With the suggestive emoji."

"No," George deadpans, and Clay laughs. It's so much *fun* teasing his friend. George always makes the funniest expressions. He just has the best face. A pretty face. It's a face Clay could stare at all day. He recalls how George had looked that day in the rain, dewdrops caught in his eyelashes. It framed his brown eyes perfectly.

*You're so cute*, Clay almost says, again. But the words won't come out, stuck in his mouth like an uncomfortable rock. The butterflies in him are going crazy.

"Aren't you going to watch the movie?"

Clay snaps out of his thoughts. "You're not watching it either."

"Already seen it," George replies.

"I think I have too," Clay admits. It's an impressive movie, and it's obvious the directors put a lot of work into it, but none of the plot points hit him as surprising.

"I thought you couldn't remember anything?"

"Well, I clearly remember how to play minecraft, so there's definitely some wiggle room for exceptions in there."

George shuffles next to him. "Should I change the movie then?"

"Sure, whatever."

George finds another movie and puts that one on. Eventually, he stops looking at his phone and

actually starts paying attention to the movie. But Clay is honestly too tired to do the same. He had been so afraid of sleeping through midnight, he'd just refrained from sleeping at all, and now *he* was sleep-deprived. Such irony was life.

Clay tunes out the sound of the movie, and lets his eyelids close. It's not like George could tell whether he was watching or not anyway. It would probably be fine if he snoozed for a bit.

"Hey, Clay?"

*Clay turns, sees, and he melts at the sight of sleepy-George, lying next to him. "Hm? What is it?"*

*"You..." George yawns, "You know I love you, right?"*

*Clay grins. His heart is brimming with love. He loves George. He loves him so much that it hurts. "I—" He stops. He can't say it. Why can't he say it?*

*"Clay?" George's face creases with worry. "What's wrong?"*

"Clay? Clay! "

Clay jerks awake. "Wh-what?" He realizes, faintly, that his head had been resting on George's shoulder as he slept.

"You were dreaming," George answers, a worried frown on his face. "And you were moving around a lot, I wasn't sure if it was a nightmare or..."

"Oh." Clay is a little less confused now. He'd accidentally mixed up the dream-George with the real George for a second there. He runs a hand through his hair, trying to calm himself. "Um, it wasn't a nightmare." Probably. Clay doesn't think it counts as one, but it's kind of weird to categorize it.

"Oh," George frowns. "Sorry, I just woke you up for no reason then."

"No worries," Clay reassures him. "Is the movie over?"

"It's *been* over for ages. I just didn't wake you up because—" He stops mid-sentence. George's eyes are trained at Clay's back. "Uh, Clay...? Since *when* did you have only one pin left?"

Clay freezes, looks down at the space between the mattress and the bed. Sure enough, another pin sits there, newly fallen off. Once again, a feeling of bittersweet crashes inside him. God, he so badly wants to hope. But he's terrified of hoping, when all he's ever done is give up.

"Oh," Clay finally says, grabbing the pin, "I guess I lost one just now."

"From... dreaming?"

Clay is honestly confused too. It hadn't even been a good dream. "I guess so?"

"Where's the other one?"

*Damn.* Clay had hoped George would lose count, but his friend obviously wasn't stupid. He was going to have to come clean. "I have the other one," he admits, retrieving it from his pocket.

"Oh!" Surprise lights up his friend's face. "Um, did you just forget to tell me?"

"Yeah," Clay lies.

“...so? Why did it fall off?”

Clay opens his mouth, and once again he considers telling George the truth. He almost said it that time at the beach, almost said it when he told George that bedtime story, almost said it when they were standing in the rain. But Clay had backed out of it time and time again, because he was a coward. Because he was scared, *terrified*, of hoping for the impossible, knowing it would only be foolishly crushed.

But, after having that dream, Clay knew he couldn't lie to his friend anymore. George didn't deserve this. George, his best friend, deserved to know the truth.

George's features have slowly phased into worry. “Clay...?”

Clay opens his mouth. And this time he speaks: “George, I need to tell you something. And, I need to ask you not to hate me.”

Hearing Clay's seriousness, George's worry morphs into confusion. “Clay...? Why would I—”

“I've been lying to you all this time, George. And I know I should've said this earlier, and I'm sorry that I'm only telling you this now.”

George's eyes are wide. “Clay, what...?”

Clay swallows. “There's a time limit, George. I only had a year to break the curse. And that time will be up... in three days.”



# Tickling

## Chapter Summary

“I never told you why that pin fell off, right?”

“Yeah?”

Clay looks... nervous, weirdly enough. “Um...”

“Just spit it out, Clay.”

*Tick, tick, tick...*

“It was cuddling, George.”

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

At first, George was confused.

“...*What?* What time limit?”

Clay’s head is hung low. He isn’t looking at George. Why isn’t he looking at George? “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you.”

“Clay. *What* time limit.”

“My curse expires a year after I started my youtube channel,” Clay explains with a sigh. “I don’t remember what my channel was about, but I started it on July 6th last year. Today is July the 2nd.”

George blinks. Clay had always known this? He’d always known, and he was only telling him *now*? George is afraid to keep poking for more, but he *has* to know. So he gulps, and asks,

“What happens when time runs out?”

Clay is biting his lip.

“*Clay.*”

“I stay a doll forever.”

Shock pulses through George. The fear spreads through him, invading every cell of his body. *N-no*. It couldn’t be. It *can’t* be. “WHAT.”

“The 5th of July will be the last morning I can change into a human. After that, when I turn into a doll, I’ll never be able to... come back.”

And now that the confusion was gone, George was angry. “Clay.”

“I’m sorry, George.”

“CLAY,” George breathes a ragged breath, clenching his fists, “*what* are you sorry for.”



Clay's voice is trembling. It *never* trembles. Not Clay's voice. Not confident, know-it-all Clay. "F-for lying to you. I'm sorry th-that I made you think that I could stick with you forever, *knowing* that I would hurt you when... when I was only temporary, wh-when I *knew* that I would disappear and I—" he gulps, "I understand if you want to stop helping me because of thi—"

"Oh my god." George puts both of his hands to his face, and screams. "OH MY GOD."

Clay shrinks in on himself. He seems so... *small*, quietly ready to take on whatever barrage George was going to give him. *Clay* looking *small*. It just didn't make any fucking sense.

"...I *knew* it. Clay... CLAY, YOU'RE A FUCKING IDIOT."

Clay visibly winces. "I'm sorry—"

"What the HELL are you talking about." George nearly shouts, "You're not even *sorry* about the *right thing*!"

Clay stares at him. "Wh-what? What do you mean?"

"It's shitty that you lied," George huffs, crossing his arms, trying to keep calm. But it's so *hard* to keep calm, when his fucking *idiot* of a friend is sitting right there in front of him, having *no idea* what he did wrong. "But what I'm worried about isn't you *disappearing*, Clay. Yes, it's scary, and just the thought *terrifies* me, and I *wish* you told me earlier, but what's done is done."

"Then... why are you mad?"

"I'm *MAD*," George huffs, "Because *you seem to have GIVEN UP*, Clay! You're acting like your curse is fucking UNBREAKABLE. Even when we've made so much progress. Even when we're *so. fucking. close*. Why..." George swallows, "why don't you *trust* me?"

Clay looks taken aback. "I-I *do* trust you, George!"

"Then *why* don't you think I can help you break your curse?!"

Clay opens his mouth, and closes it. "I don't... I don't know. I'm just... just *scared* of hoping, George. It's almost been an entire *year*, and it took all of last week to even get *close*. George, what if... we *don't* manage to break it? What if all that hoping just ends up being in *vain*?"

"Clay," George sighs. "Think realistically about this. You've only been here for a little more than a week, and eight of your pins fell off. We have *three more days*, Clay, and only one more pin to go. It'd be *stupid* if *one* doesn't fall off by the end of those three days."

Clay looks torn. "But, George, what if we were just *lucky*? So many of them fell off by *accident*. We can't know for *sure* that that 'luck' will stay with us."

"You don't *need* to know that for sure," George retorts, putting his face right in front of Clay's. "You just need to know that *I'll* be here. And goddamn it, I am *going* to break your fucking curse, if it's the *last* thing I do. I *swear* it."

*Tick, tick, tick* goes the time.



"Guys, I need your help."

"Hm?" Sapnap prompts, "George, why do you sound all *serious*?"

“Because I *am*,” George gulps, failing to calm the nervousness in his hands. They’re fidgeting all over the place, unable to stop in one place. “I— I can’t really explain it, because you guys won’t believe me, but I need your help.”

A moment of silence falls over the voice-call, where Bad and Sapnap are clearly trying to figure out whether or not George is being serious. “Okay...” Bad eventually breaks the silence, “we’re listening. What do you want us to do?”

George barely slept today, but he’s never felt so wide-awake in his life. “Remember last time, when I asked you guys to list things that made life worth living for?”

“Um, yeah...?”

George knows he’s probably confusing the hell out of his friends, but he doesn’t have a choice. “Please, I... I need more ideas. Just tell me anything, *anything*, you can think of.”

“What?” Sapnap voices, “W-why?”

“Yeah, why?” Bad echoes.

“Guys, I— I told you, I *can’t* explain it. You wouldn’t believe me, and it’d take too long. Just *help* me, *please*.”

“O-okay, chill!” Sapnap replies. “Um, a lot of people find sunsets pretty?”

“Won’t work,” George responds. Clay’s human-time doesn’t overlap with it, and they’d already seen the sunrise. If one didn’t work, George doubted the other would.

“I like chicken noodle soup!” Bad offers.

“Hm... warm drinks?” George’s mind flashes to the hot chocolate they drank. That hadn’t worked, but maybe soup or tea would? He scrambles for a notepad. “Okay, I’ll write that down.”

“Oh! What about movies?” Sapnap adds.

“Nope,” George sighs, writing down Bad’s first suggestion. Clay had clearly seemed disinterested in the movies George had to offer, and scrolling through them one by one until Clay deemed one ‘worth living for’ would just be a waste of time.

“Hey, what about flowers?” Bad suggests, “A lot of people like flowers.”

Oh. George blushes when he pictures giving Clay a bouquet, but he quickly shakes the image away. He had to be willing to do *anything*. It didn’t matter what undertones such an action would have. “Okay, I’ll put that down too.”

“Amusement parks!” Sapnap offers, sounding pleased with himself.

“Nope,” George rejects within a second.

“What?” He can *hear* Sapnap’s pout, “How come you accepted all of *Bad’s* suggestions and none of mine?”

“Then start giving *better* suggestions, Sapnap.”

“Ugh, okay, then... what about pancakes? Omelettes? French toast?”

George frowns. “Why’re you listing only breakfast items?”

Sapnap laughs. “I don’t know man, it’s early in the day. I kind of want breakfast.”

George thinks about that. He’s always given Clay savory items because it was “nighttime,” but 6am could also be considered an early morning. Did Clay like sweet things? George starts writing. “Okay, putting that down.”

“Yes!” Sapnap cheers triumphantly.

“Oooh ooh,” Bad inserts, “what about massages?”

George smacks his lips thoughtfully. Couldn’t hurt to write it down, right?

“Hiking!” Sapnap shouts.

“Travelling!” Bad adds.

“Drawing!”

“Puzzles!”

“Snow!”

“Sapnap, it’s *July*.” George rolls his eyes. “There isn’t going to be any snow.”

“Well, you didn’t *tell* us that they had to be *summer* -related activities,” Sapnap defends, sounding mildly annoyed. “You can’t just assume we’ll all be on the same wavelength as you.”

George half wants to yell at him for being so snarky, but he holds his tongue. He needs to remind himself that his friends are *helping*. “Yeah yeah, okay. What I need are things that can be done in the summer, *and* can be completed from a time period of 12 to 7am.”

For a second, there’s just confused silence. “Uh... what’s with the specific restraints?” Bad asks.

George sighs. “Just... don’t question it.”

*Tick, tick, tick...*



“George,” Clay had resisted, “Today’s supposed to be a *sleeping* day for you.”

“God, it’s fine Clay. I had a nap in the afternoon, so don’t worry about me.”

The frown on Clay’s face hasn’t gone away. “George...”

“I made a promise to break your curse, okay? And I’m planning on keeping it. There’s no way I’m going to sleep through the night when we could be making progress on it.”

Clay looks... guilty. “I’m sorry, that you have to stay up for me.”

“If you’re really sorry, then start worrying about yourself more. Help me figure out ways to get your pins to fall off.”

“But, that’s the *problem*, George. I don’t remember anything about my life. I don’t *know* what I like or dislike.”

“Then I guess that means we’re starting with this,” George decides, popping open a can of soup.

Clay sees what’s in George’s hands, and snickers. “Is that chicken noodle soup?”

“Yes.”

“In a *can*?”

“*Yes*,” George gives an exasperated sigh. “Bad said it would be better to cook it from scratch, but frankly, I haven’t got a clue how to make it, and the whole process would take too long. We’re better off just taking the shortcut.”

Clay gives a little hum. George isn’t sure if he’s laughing at him or not, then decides he doesn’t care. Sue him for being lazy, but he’s just trying to save time. He pours out enough soup for two bowls, and sticks them in the microwave.

*Tick, tick, tick.*

“Here we g— *Ow!* What the fuck, it’s *hot*.”

Clay wheezes behind him. “What’d you expect, Sherlock?”

“Shut up,” George mumbles, grabbing a dish towel to act as a buffer between the bowl and his hands. He successfully brings it to the counter. “There, I did it.”

“*Amazing* work,” Clay praises.

“My god.” Why was Clay always so insufferable? “Just, grab a spoon from that drawer. I’m gonna go get something.”

When George returns to the kitchen with several papers and pencils from his room, he checks the back of Clay’s head. Still one pin left. George honestly expected as much. “Soup not worth living for?” George jokes.

“Nope,” Clay gives a sheepish smile back, “s still good though. For a *canned* soup.”

“You’re impossible,” George huffs, dumping the things he’s brought down onto the table.

Clay perks up. “What’re these for?”

“I printed a bunch of crosswords, mazes, word searches,” George explains, lining up the color pencils so that they don’t roll off the table. “There’s a couple blank sheets in there too, if you wanna draw something.”

Clay chuckles. “This is stupid.”

“Well, at least I’m *trying*.”

“Yeah, I know.” Clay hesitates, then picks up a pencil. “Um, you wanna join me?”

“Hm,” George hums, grabbing himself a stool, “sure, I guess so.”

They work on the puzzles together, taking turns between sipping chicken soup and writing down solutions. George learns that Clay’s really good at mazes and wordsearches, but shit at crosswords. (Probably because of his memory loss and all, but still. It feels nice to be better than Clay at something, so George can’t help rubbing it in a little bit.) At one point, Luca had leaped onto the

counter and started stepping all over the pages, but George didn't have the heart to chase him off because Clay seemed to enjoy his presence.

Once they've solved all the puzzles, they move on to the blank pages. The first thing Clay draws is a depiction of his doll self. George snickers at the sight of it.

"Clay, you're *shit* at drawing."

His friend playfully pushes him. "You're one to talk!" He laughs, pointing at George's picture of a minecraft dog, "Your drawing looks even worse than mine!"

George fake gasps. "No, mine is *tons* better than yours!"

After some squabbling, George convinces Clay that they'll leave the jurisdiction to Bad and Sapnap. He snaps a picture and, after sending it, looks up to see Clay placing the drawings on the fridge with magnets.

"Clay!" George laughs, "What are you *doing*?"

His friend smirks back, wheezing a little. "Putting them on the fridge," he answers with the obvious.

George is about to ask why, but he stops, his smile faltering, when he realizes the last pin still hasn't fallen off Dream's band.

*Tick, tick, tick...*

"George?"

George is scrolling through his phone's Notes (he had transferred over the things on his notepad). "You know what? Since you seemed so against *canned* soup, we're going to do some actual cooking now."

Clay tilts his head, looking amused. "Really? What're you planning on making?"

"Pancakes."

As George shuffles around the kitchen to gather the needed materials, Clay puts the bowls into the sink and clears away the papers. George uses his phone to open up the recipe he'd planned to use beforehand, and groans at the list of instructions.

"Seriously, I should've just bought a bag of pancake mix."

"Hm? I thought you were a chef, Georgie~" Clay teasingly bumps George's shoulder. "Where did those sandwich-making skills of yours go?"

"*That was literally* just stacking a bunch of ingredients in layers."

Clay shrugs. "Pancakes are the same. You're just mixing a bunch of ingredients together in a bowl."

"But there's *measurements*, Clay." George groans. "I... I don't have any measuring cups."

For a second, Clay just stares at him. Then he bursts into laughter, falling into a wheezing fit. "Geooooorge...!"

“Yeah yeah, laugh it up. But what am I meant to do?!”

Clay’s laughter dies down a little. “Dude, I— I think I can help. I know a bit about their general sizes, and if we need to, we can just search up alternative internet solutions to measure things.”

So, that’s how the two of them end up guessing the measurements for the pancake recipe. They fight over the ingredients (“What, *blueberries*? Are you *crazy*? Chocolate chips are obviously better!”) and burn a couple of them because they’re too busy laughing to pay attention. After George fails a pancake flip, he leaves Clay to do the rest of them. (He nails every single one, annoyingly enough.) They add syrup even though there’s already chocolate in every pancake (thanks to Clay), and somehow, by some goddamn miracle, they managed to make them taste delicious. *Even* the burnt ones.

“Told you chocolate chips were better,” Clay speaks through a mouthful of pancake.

“*Ew*, don’t *talk* while you’re eating!” George laughs, playfully shoving his friend. “And, *no*, blueberries are still better.”

“You’re just biased because blue’s your favorite color,” Clay rolls his eyes. (Or at least, George thinks he is. He’s studied enough of Clay’s reactions to be able to tell by now.)

“Am *not*,” George retorts, and when he’s finished, he cleans his syrupy-hands by wiping them on Clay.

“What, *ew*!” Clay jumps out of his seat, looking disgusted. “*George!* ”

George giggles. “That’s what you *get* for dissing blueberries.”

George knows Clay, so he manages to run out of his seat before Clay can get the chance to try to wipe *his* hands as revenge. But because he knows Clay, he’s also aware that he can’t outrun his friend. Just as George predicted, Clay catches him quickly, pouncing on him and managing to trap him against the couch. He wipes his hands against George’s cheeks.

“Wha— *Clay! What the hell!* ”

His friend snickers. “That’s what you get for disrespecting chocolate chips,” Clay mirrors.

George groans. “God, now I’m *sticky* all over.” He tries to get up, but finds that he can’t with Clay lying on top of him. “Clay, get *off*. I need to wash my face!”

Clay laughs. “Nah, I don’t want to.”

George suddenly realizes how close their faces are. His heart starts beating faster. “Clay. ”

“I’m actually pretty comfortable here.”

“*Clay!*”

Clay wheezes, and finally rolls off of him. The mild heart attack George just had quickly fades away, and he hurries to the bathroom under the guise of needing to wash his face to hide his definitely-pink face.

By the time he’s back, Clay hasn’t moved from his position next to the couch. “Hey, George?”

“Yeah?”

Clay pauses, clearly hesitant about something. “I never told you why that pin fell off, right?”

Oh, yeah. George had been so shocked with the “time limit” news that he’d simply forgotten. But why was Clay bringing this up now? “Yeah?”

Clay looks... nervous, weirdly enough. “Um...” he pauses. For some reason, he’s struggling to tell George the reason.

George sighs, plopping himself on the couch beside Clay. “Just spit it out, Clay.”

Clay takes a deep breath. “It was cuddling, George.”

George stares, wondering if he’s heard right. “What?”

“That night, when you fell asleep in my arms,” Clay explains, stuttering a bit, “I don’t know if you remember it. You were exhausted, you just knocked yourself out. We were, uh, kind of cuddling at that point, and the pin fell off then.”

“...oh,” George blinks. He lets that information sink in. Clay, *cuddling* him? He can feel his cheeks flare up with heat at just the thought. “Um, okay. So...?”

“You don’t think it’s weird?” Clay asks. George shakes his head. “So... would you be willing to do it again?”

“Again?” George echoes.

“Again,” Clay confirms.

“...right now?”

“Whenever you want,” Clay answers cautiously.

George’s heartbeat is so loud, he can hear it in his ears. “Um, I’d be okay with right now, if you’re okay with it.”

Clay gives him a small smile. “Is the couch okay?”

*Tick, tick, tick...*

But this time, George ignores the ticking and nods. Clay leans back into the corner of the couch and opens his arms. George, slowly but surely, crawls his way over and sinks into Clay’s embrace. *Oh*. It’s warm. George remembers now, how warm it was that time too. Being in Clay’s arms just felt... safe.

Clay’s breathing slows, so George closes his eyes. He’s so comfortable, he thinks he could fall asleep, just like this. Tucked away in Clay’s arms, like he belongs there. It’s weird, just how much he trusts a man whose face he can’t even see. But Clay is different. Clay is full of exceptions, in George’s book.

“Hey, George?”

*George looks, and realizes Clay’s eyes aren’t blue. They’ve, in fact, never been blue.* “What?”

“Do you love me?”

*George blinks, licking his lips. “I think...” he smiles, “I think I always have.”*



## Chapter End Notes

Let's end with fluff to apologize for all the angst that's been going on... =v=;;



# Your Face

## Chapter Summary

“Clay, be careful! ”

“I am!” his friend wheezes. And George just watches, because he thinks Clay is beautiful. His messy hair, his bright smile, even his stupid mask. He loves it all. George loves everything about him.

He loves Clay.

## Chapter Notes

There's going to be a scene in here inspired by the fic "A Little Cold, A Little Numb," so ig if it seems familiar, you'll know the reason why. xD  
Also uwu song lyrics.  
We're bathing in references here, haha~

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Are we going outside this time?”

“Yep,” George confirms, “yesterday we spent the whole night indoors, and it obviously wasn’t making any progress on your curse. So we’re trying the other option today.”

“Alright,” Clay shrugs. “You got enough sleep, yeah?”

“M-hm.” George had spent the whole day sleeping and preparing things, just so that he could be ready for tonight. He hadn’t even had time to play minecraft with his friends, or check his messages. And, speaking of checking his messages... George realizes there’s a new text from Ssnap. He must’ve responded to George’s question about the little drawing competition he had with Clay.

*Ssnap: lol the Dream is obv better*

For a second, George is confused. Was he talking about the ‘dream’ doll? But why would he put it like that?

*George: do you mean the doll ..?*

*Ssnap: oh*

*Ssnap: yeah I meant the doll*

...okay. That was weird.

Clay notices what George is doing. “So? Who won?”

“It was a tie,” George lies.

“What.” Clay looks at George for a few seconds before laughing. “There’s *no way*, George, you’re such a liar.”

“I’m not lying!” George grins.

“Then show me the messages!”

“Um,” George giggles nervously, “No.”

“See, I knew it! You’re such a liar, George.”

“No, I’m *not* ! I, um... Showing you my messages is an invasion of my privacy,” George diverts, grabbing the brown paper bag he had prepared earlier, “Now come on, we’re leaving.”

“*George!*” Clay laughs, but he doesn’t push the subject. He gives Luca an affectionate pat on his head before following George out. Once again, George leads them to the car, taking the driver’s seat. This time though, Clay doesn’t say anything, appearing to be lost in thought.

In about twenty minutes, they’re back at the beach. Thankfully, it’s not that windy, but. George hopes he’s not making a huge mistake by trying to do this.

Clay looks confused at George’s choice of location. “George, haven’t we already been here?”

“Yes, but we’re not swimming this time,” George replies, hopping over the railing, with no more grace than the last time. Clay follows from behind, frustratingly good at making everything he does look easy. “I just needed to find a wide-open area.”

“An empty place?” Clay tilts his head. “...why?”

“Clay, do you know what day it is?”

“The second-to-last day before the time limit?” Clay guesses. At George’s wince though, his smile falls. “Sorry, that was a bad joke. It’s the 4th of July, right?”

“Yeah. And you weird americans with your weird holidays celebrate it.” George reaches into his bag, and watches as Clay’s eyes grow wide, a smile lighting up his face.

“Oh my god, *George!* Are those *fireworks?*” Clay peers into George’s bag, excitedly digging through its contents. “How many *are* there? *George!*” Clay laughs, “Why did you buy so *many?*”

“I heard they get used up really quickly,” George shrugs, secretly pleased with Clay’s reaction.

“These... they’re *expensive* though, aren’t they?”

“Not really,” George lies. “Come on, let’s try one of these... *sparkler* things, or whatever.”

After the two of them read through the caution labels, Clay uses a candle lighter to bring a sparkler to life. It crackles brilliantly, illuminating their faces.

“C’mon, George! Bring your sparklers over, I can light them up for you.”

“I-I’m *scared!*” George laughs, backing away a little. “Why do you guys like *fireworks* anyway? They’re just dangerous, sparkly lights.”

Clay does the motion of rolling his eyes. “Come *on*, George.”

A minute later, and George has a sparkler in each hand. The sparks are flying *everywhere*. “C-Clay!” George shouts, holding them an arms-length away, “What if they land on my hands?!”

Clay wheezes at George’s panicked expression. “Don’t *worry*, George! Just hold them horizontally, and they won’t!”

“I am going to *kill* you if I die.”

Clay lights several more sparklers, waving them around cheerfully. “George, look at this!”

George is looking alright. Clay’s dancing around in circles like he’s in a goddamn *festival*, several sparklers lit in both of his hands. (How did he even *do* that?) “Clay, be *careful*!”

“I *am*!” his friend wheezes. And George just watches, because he thinks Clay is beautiful. His messy hair, his bright smile, even his stupid mask. He loves it all. He loves Clay’s cocky but silly attitude. He loves Clay’s laugh, Clay’s hands, Clay’s height (even if it makes George feel small). George loves everything about him.

He loves Clay.

He realized it, when he woke up this morning. It had come out of *nowhere*, but it was also like George had always known. Like he had just been waiting for himself to realize it. When he tried to unwrap it, it used to make him feel so... *ashamed*. But now that he knew, he was itching to say it. The stinging feeling in his heart wouldn’t go away until he did.

But not yet. Now wasn’t the time.

In about a minute, George’s sparklers finally run out (*phew*), and Clay’s quickly follows. They’re plunged into darkness again. “What else do you have?”

George shakes himself out of his stupor, shuffling around the bag again. “Um, there’s these things called *bang snaps* and poppers...?”

“George,” Clay snorts, “those are for *kids*. They hardly even classify as fireworks.”

George scoffs. “Well, I wasn’t aware there was a *hierarchy* of fireworks, Clay.”

Clay chuckles. “If you’re scared of lighting the bigger ones, we can start with the smaller ones and build our way up.”

So they temporarily move to the sidewalk, to light up the spinners and Ground Bloom Flowers. George thinks they’re pretty similar; they’re fireworks that spin in circles for a couple seconds, spewing out sparks and shards of light. He found the sparklers to be more fun, but he doesn’t want to admit it in front of Clay.

“Let’s do a cone fountain next!”

“Those aren’t too loud, right?” George asks worriedly.

“Um, well, they’re mostly pretty quiet,” Clay replies. He tactfully places one in the middle of the beach, then lights it up. “Let’s back up a bit,” he grins.

Sparks spew out of the cone, lighting up the air in front of them. It flows out like water from a fountain, spraying in a bright arc. Nearing the end of the show, sparks begin to pop, sending

crackles through the air.

“*Clay!* ” George shouts, covering his ears, “You lied! It *is* loud! Someone’s going to hear us!”

His friend laughs. “So what? It’s not like what we’re doing is illegal.” At George’s grim expression, Clay pauses. “Wait... George? This isn’t illegal, is it?”

George grins sheepishly. “Um...”

“Oh my *god. George!* ”

George can’t help giggling. “Look, I’m sorry okay? We should probably leave, in case somebody saw.”

“Wait,” Clay stops him, taking a new firework out of the bag, “let’s just do one more.”

“...Rockets?”

Clay walks a few paces away, sticks a few of the fireworks into the ground, and quickly lights them up. He dashes back with a grin on his face. “Let’s get ready to run.”

“What?”

Without warning, the rockets speed into the sky, flying silently. When they reach their maximum height, they explode into a colorful shower of sparks and light, filling the night with noises of *booms*.

“*Clay!* ” George pales. “That is so *high*. We’re *screwed*, someone *definitely* would’ve seen that!”

His friend wheezes, already making a dash back to the car, “Then *run!* ”

The two friends sprint back to the car at record speed. Adrenaline is pumping through him, and George can’t help the smile that appears on his face as he drives them away, like his life depended on it. Once they were gone, the smoke in the air was the only evidence that remained of them ever being there.



“I can’t believe we’re back already. We were supposed to spend the whole *night* outside. We didn’t even *use* all the fireworks!”

Clay chuckles from the couch. He clearly found this whole ordeal amusing.

“And in the end, it wasn’t even that worth it,” George sighs, returning from the kitchen with two cups of tea. Luca is nowhere to be seen, surprisingly. He flicks the forehead of Clay’s mask, “Your last pin didn’t fall off.”

Clay’s smile falls. “*George...* just because a pin didn’t fall off doesn’t mean I didn’t have *fun*.”

George pauses, his teeth worrying his bottom lip. “Y-yeah, I know. It still sucks though.”

Clay hums in quiet agreement, sipping from his cup. George watches him intently, waiting. But as expected, the pin doesn’t fall off.

“Stop looking at me like that.” Is it just him, or does Clay sound... embarrassed? “Your eyes are making me nervous.”

“What do you mean?”

“It makes me feel like... you’re expecting something. From me. And when it doesn’t work out, you get this sad look on your face and,” Clay sighs, “it feels like *I* failed you. Even though I— I *know* it’s not my fault. But I feel kind of bad anyway.”

“Oh,” George blinks, looking away, “Sorry. I didn’t realize you felt that way.”

“It’s not your fault either,” Clay shrugs. “It’s just, we’re in a shitty situation, is all.”

“Hey, Clay?” At his friend’s hum of response, George continues, “Can I massage your shoulders?”

Clay looks at him. Looks at him, for so long, that George starts growing pink. “Why?”

George was starting to regret asking. “It’s just something stupid Bad suggested,” he mumbles, “Maybe it’s not a good idea, we don’t—”

“You... you can, if you want,” Clay cuts in. “Um, I’m not opposed to it, or anything. If you think it’ll help with the curse, then... we can try?”

“O-okay,” George gulps. No backing out of this now. “Come sit in front of me.” Clay obliges, settling on the carpet in front of him. “Take off your hoodie, too.”

And then it was just Clay in a white t-shirt, his back facing George, expectantly waiting. George isn’t sure what to do, but he tries his best, placing his hands on Clay’s broad shoulders and working his fingers. It feels awkward. George hasn’t done this before for anyone else.

“Does it feel okay?”

“Mm...” his friend replies, a smile in his voice, “you could do it harder.”

George presses a little bit harder. “Now?”

Clay tsks. “Such weak hands. Did playing minecraft everyday not give you *any* muscle— *Ow!* George!”

George smirks. “What about now, Clay? Does my massage suit your tastes?”

Clay grumbles something about George being an idiot, and he grins. Just like that, the awkwardness was gone. George, to his surprise, can feel Clay’s muscles relaxing as he works his hands. He was, through some miracle, giving a good massage. George feels happy, knowing he must be doing something right.

He moves his hands a bit lower, to Clay’s back. Clay suddenly makes a noise, so quiet, George thinks he must’ve imagined it. But as he keeps going, Clay keeps making noises. Sometimes it’s a sigh, sometimes a gasp, sometimes a whimper. George has never heard Clay be so... *expressive* before. It encourages him to keep doing well, eliciting more unique sounds from Clay’s throat. George doesn’t know he’s doing it, but at some point, he’d started to file away the noises Clay made, like he was some kind of fucking tape recorder.

*I’m going crazy*, George realizes. He gives Clay’s shoulders a final pat, and withdraws his hands. The noises stop, much to his disappointment. “So? How was it?”

Clay turns to him, offering a grateful smile. “It was actually really good, George. I withdraw my statement about your nonexistent muscles.”

George beams. Then pauses. The pin... it still hasn't fallen.

He was going to run out of ideas at this point.

George doesn't get it. Why was nothing he was doing working? It was almost as if they'd really exhausted all their resources in the first week, leaving them with nothing to work with now. It was so *frustrating*. He misses the days where a pin would fall off almost every day, with barely any effort. Because this...? This progress was embarrassing. It made George's promise seem empty.

Clay's looking at him funny, and George realizes he must've been doing that 'sad look' again. "Sorry—" he starts to say.

"George, I want to suggest something."

"Um, okay. What?"

"Tomorrow, I don't want you to prepare anything," Clay says. "Let's just go outside, and... do whatever we want. Make decisions on the spur of the moment."

George frowns. "But, Clay, what if we don't find anything?"

"We've already tried everything on your list, right? We're going to need to accept that the forceful tactic may not be the right one. I mean, so many of the pins falling were totally unplanned, you know? So, what if we try to bank on that?"

"But, *Clay*. Tomorrow is the *last* day..."

Clay puts a hand on George's leg. "It's all the more reason we should do it, George. We have to try *everything*, right? And leaving it up to chance is also trying."

George swallows. "I... I don't know, Clay. I'm not sure about this."

"Just," Clay sighs, "Just think about it, okay? I'm not saying we have to do it. I just wanted to offer a suggestion."

George's mind is fighting with itself. Everything Clay has said makes sense. But he hates not doing anything, not being productive, not actively *fighting* for Clay. He hates feeling useless.

"O-okay," he eventually says. He'll think about it. Clay climbs back onto the couch and offers his arms again. George is more than happy to accept the embrace.

He just hopes this isn't going to be the last time.



"Flowers...?" Clay echoes, gingerly accepting the present. There's a shit-eating grin on his face. "George, are you...?"

"That's the only thing I prepared today," George mumbles, embarrassed he actually went through with it, "So... there is no plan. We're going to use your idea."

Clay's smile doesn't go away, but it does turn a little fonder. "Okay. Thank you for the flowers, George."

"You're welcome."

George finds them a vase for the bouquet, and then they're off. They choose to walk, much like their first adventure outside, aimlessly wandering. They had no destination. Just a goal. A goal with no plan.

"Remember when you rented that bike?" Clay asks out of the blue, "And you rode on the pegs behind me?"

"Yeah, of course."

"You remember when you got soaked, chasing me in the rain?"

"Obviously."

"Do you remember how I got into coding because of that one video we shot together?"

"Yes, Clay, I *remember*. Of course I remember. Why are you bringing up all these things now?"

His friend smiles. "Because all those things were *unplanned*, George. The pins that fell then were always pleasant surprises, because those chances spawned on accident. I *know* we can do this, George. We just have to believe in it."

George takes a deep breath, and nods. "Okay... okay. We can do this. Let's... keep walking."

So they walk. For ages and ages, they walk and talk. They observe the buildings around them, examine plants they walk by, point out different car models. They talk about George's childhood, talk about making more Minecraft plug-ins, talk about their favorite songs. They talk until George's throat is sore from laughing, until his legs grow numb from walking. But no matter how long they walk, the 'chance' they are looking for never appears.

They finally stop at a stone bridge, leaning over the edge of its wall to look at the water passing underneath them. The white pie-shaped moon casts a pretty glow to its surface.

"Hey George," Clay prompts, "Wasn't the moon half-full when we went to the beach for the first time?"

"Um, yeah? I think so."

"Didn't I also lose half of my pins by that day?"

George opens his mouth to agree, but pauses when he realizes what Clay is getting at. A half-moon for ridding half of the pins. And now, the moon in the sky was a perfect orb...

"You think that a full moon means we'll break your curse," George translates.

"Wouldn't that be pretty neat though?" Clay smiles.

And George knows time is ticking. He knows they've been outside for ages, and that time wasn't getting any slower. They were fast approaching the deadline, but for some reason, Clay was just so... *calm*. And George didn't get it. His nerves were frayed, his hands are trembling. Because *god*, he's scared. He's *so* scared, of losing Clay. Imagining him lost to the void, to permanently become a *doll* for the rest of his life... George was definitely panicking. They were reaching the end of the line. They were running out of time.

*Tick, tick, tick. . . .*

"Clay, why aren't you *scared* ? Why... how are you so *calm* right now?"

When Clay doesn't answer, George looks. *Really* looks. And he realizes he was mistaken. There is a smile on Clay's face, but his hands are trembling too. Even more than George.

"I'm sorry, George," Clay whispers. "I suggested that we do this. If this fails, and I become a doll, don't..." he faces George, "don't blame yourself for this, okay? It's my fault."

"Clay..." George whispers. His head is screaming at him. Clay is giving up again. But... *Fuck. I'm giving up too, aren't I?* "Clay." He says it again, louder this time.

"George..."

All of George's instincts are screaming at him. His heart is pounding, but wrapped in cellophane. The stinging has never felt so strong as it did now. "Clay, I'm *not* giving up on you."

"Really, it's okay, George." Clay sounds quietly resigned.

"I'm *not* giving up on you!" George nearly shouts, his fists clenched at his sides, "Because... *because...*"

*Say it. Say it! Before it's too late. Before he's gone forever.*

"Because...?"

George shuts his eyes, face turned towards the ground. "Because... because I'm in *love* with you, Clay. For so long, it's always been you. I—" George swallows. "I *love* you, Clay. And that's why I *can't* give up on you."

There's a clunking sound. George snaps his eyes open. His heart stops. Something's on the ground in front of him, but it isn't a pin.

It's an entire mask.

George slowly looks up, and his heart stutters when he sees *him* for the first time. A cute boy with a splash of freckles. Tears wet on his cheeks. And his *eyes*. They're not blue. But they're *better* than blue.

"I love you too, George." That's Clay's smile. That's Clay's voice. That voice is coming from that face and that face is *Clay's*. "And I... I found it. The last thing that makes my life worth living for... It's *you*."

He then steps forward, wraps George into his arms, and kisses him.

## Chapter End Notes

:)



# Someday

## Chapter Notes

Note: edited this chap a bit, so if you're re-reading and see something different, that's the reason why -3-

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Sapnap, Bad... this is Dream.”

The voice call goes silent. When Clay got his memories back, he told George everything. He told George about his grandma that cursed him, the Minecraft channel he had been planning to start, and the friends he left behind. *George's* friends. The coincidence was so stupid that it was uncanny. George had a hard time believing him at first.

*“I never told anyone my real name, and I'd never talked with Bad or Sapnap in real life before,” Clay had explained, “That's why they didn't recognize me from your video.”*

“Dream...?” Bad echoes. He sounds confused.

“Dream... no, *Clay*.” Sapnap's voice is shaky. “You better *not* be lying. George! If this is a joke, it's not funny.”

“It's him, Sapnap. He lost his memories, he couldn't contact you. It's... it's not his fault.”

“I don't believe you,” Sapnap snaps. “Dream is gone. A year ago, he stopped talking to us. His online presence just *disappeared*. He *vanished* off the face of the planet.”

“Sapnap,” Clay starts, “That's *me*. I'm him... I'm *Dream*! I swear!”

“Then... then *prove it!* ”

Clay hesitates for only a second before launching into a full-blown autobiography of their friendship: the year they met, the dumb shenanigans they went through as kids, his mannerisms and habits, and little details about incidents or nicknames that only they would know about. It's so comprehensive that George actually feels like he's intruding a bit.

“W-well,” Sapnap treads uncertainly, “You could've... searched that up?”

“Not all of what I said is stuff you can find out online, Sapnap. You know this.”

At Sapnap's silence, Bad speaks up. “Well... Dream? What do you know about me?”

This time the biography is shorter, a little less detailed, but it's still quite clear they've been friends for a while. “Um,” Clay pauses, smiling a little as he reaches the end of his proof, “There was this one time, you uh, went on Discord to rant to me about Skeppy...”

“Oh... OH MY GOD. DREAM. SHUT UP, YOU MUFFIN-HEA—” Bad pauses, as if he's suddenly realized what this means. “Sapnap. SAPNAP! It's Dream, it's *him!* ”

“It’s you?” Sapnap’s voice comes out as a whisper. “It’s *actually* you, Dream?”

“Yeah, it is,” Clay chuckles next to George. “It’s me.”

“*Dream*,” Sapnap takes a deep breath, sounding strangled, “where did you *go* ?! Why did you just *leave*, without a *word*, and... how are you in the *UK*!? And at *George’s house*?? ”

“I went through hell and came back,” Clay jokes.

“...*Dream*! ”

Clay sighs, patting George on the shoulder. “Well, I leave the explaining to you,” he smiles.

George blinks, snapping out of his stupor from staring at Clay’s freckled face. “*What?! Why me.*”

“Because you *looove* me George,” Clay teases, kissing George on the cheek. George feels his face light up like a tomato.

“*F-fine*,” he grumbles. “You’re so *lazy*, Clay.”

Clay giggles. Actually fucking *giggles*. “Aww *Georgie*, you’re the best~”

So George does Clay’s job for him and explains. He tells Sapnap about the doll they found at the antique shop, the curse that was placed on Clay, and the requirements that were needed to break it.

“WHAT? So the doll was actually *Dream the whole time*!?”

“Oh!” Bad’s voice lights up in recognition. “That’s the picture you sent me, right Sapnap? The one that looked like Dream’s youtube icon?”

At George’s questioning stare, Clay wraps his arms around his shoulders. “I’ll tell you later,” he whispers.

“This is really hard to believe,” Sapnap admits.

“Yeah,” George agrees, “Imagine how *I* felt to see a stranger pop up in my living room.”

“Okay,” Bad continues, “Then what did you do? What happened?”

“It has something to do with those weird questions you started asking, right?” Sapnap guesses.

George then does his best to explain the events that unfolded after Sapnap’s departure, including his first meeting with Clay, the planned pins, the unplanned ones. But Clay is so... *distracting*. He keeps nuzzling his nose behind George’s ears and pressing soft kisses to his neck. It gets to the point where George can’t say a single sentence without squealing in the middle of it.

“*CLAY*, oh my god, will you *STOP IT*?”

“Hm?” Bad prompts, innocent as ever, “What’s he doing?”

George blushes. “*Nothing*, he’s—“

“I’m kissing my *boyfriend*,” Clay interrupts.

Silence. George’s face is burning. Then, “Uh,” Sapnap starts, “are you two the only ones in the room?”

“HOLY MUFFIN,” Bad shouts, “Are you two *together?!* ”

“...yes,” George answers, flicking Clay on the shoulder. His boyfriend wheezes at him, only hugging him tighter. “Dream is my idiotic boyfriend.”

“Holy shit,” Sapnap laughs. (“*Language!*” ) “Congrats, guys!”

“Yeah, congratulations! I’m really happy for you two!”

George blushes. They sound so genuinely happy for him and, after three days of totally stressing out and not having enough time to talk to either of his two friends, having this was nice. “Thanks...”

“Aw, is my Georgie shy?” Clay teases, nuzzling the side of his face, “You’re so cute~”

George swats Clay away in mock irritation. “*You’re* one to talk,” he grumbles, “Have you even *seen* yourself?”

Clay’s mouth falls open, in pleasant surprise. “*George!!!* ” His smile is so bright, it’s blinding.

“Oh my god,” Sapnap groans, “How did we only notice this *now* ? You two are so *gross*.”

Bad laughs, speaking tentatively, “I mean, I think it’s kind of cute...?”

“They are *not* cute.”

George giggles at the friendly banter. “Come on guys, we’re getting off-topic here.”

“Actually,” Bad deflects, “I disagree. I think we’re now on the *right* topic. How did this even *happen* ?”

“Yeah, yeah! Who confessed first?”

“George did,” Clay answers.

“HELL YEAH!” (“*LANGUAGE, SAPNAP!*” ) “YOU GO, GEORGE!”

“For how long were you planning to?” Bad asks excitedly.

“It was on the spur of the moment!” George sputters, “I— I honestly hadn’t planned to confess at all. It just... *came out*.”

“We had the right idea then, not planning anything for the last day,” Clay smiles. “I’m so glad it worked out, George. I’m... I’m just so *happy*.”

George grins back, looking into Clay’s bright yellow (green) eyes. Finally, he could see Clay in his entirety. Clay, who is beautiful in every way.

“I’m... I’m happy, too.”



“Hey George?”

The two are lying on the same bed, facing towards each other. They’re supposed to be sleeping, and although George was delighted Clay was able to remain human throughout the day, he

supposes he still isn't quite used to it yet. George has been idly playing with Clay's hair for the past hour now.

"Yeah?"

"Why do you keep touching my hair?"

George brushes away a strand in front of his boyfriend's face. "Dunno. 'S soft."

Clay wheezes. "George..."

George grins. "What?"

"You're so cute sometimes, you know that?"

George feels his face blush pink. "*Clay*, y-you're an idiot."

"Yeah, but I'm *your* idiot." When George stares at Clay, looking both embarrassed and confused, Clay laughs. "I've been waiting to use that line for a while. Did you know you sleep-talk, George?"

George's eyes widen. "Uh... yeah?" At Clay's smirk, he shuts his eyes. "Oh no. What stupid things have I been saying?"

"Oh, nothing much~" Clay answers, pulling George closer to him so that his head is under Clay's chin, "Just that you *loooove* me~"

"WHAT. No way."

Clay snickers. "You do! Well, close enough to that, anyway."

George is glad his face is buried in Clay's collarbone, since his face is probably bright red. "Why am I so *embarrassing*."

Clay chuckles. His hands are tracing circles in George's back. "I... I dream about you too."

*Oh*. George's heart does a happy thrum. "R-really?"

"Mhm. But I don't sleep talk like an idiot."

George gently smacks his boyfriend, and he laughs. They stay in that position for a while, just cuddling, with George buried in Clay's scent. George thinks — has always thought — that Clay smells nice. He just has this odd, musty smell that nothing else can replicate.

"George, I'm... I'm going to have to go back to the US. You know that, right?"

George sighs. He had known this conversation was coming, but it didn't mean he had to like it. "Yeah, I know," he replies, fiddling with Clay's hoodie strings.

"I'll have to explain myself to my family," Clay continues, "and see how they're doing. I kind of owe them a visit for just vanishing for a whole year."

"I-I know. I get it. But," George hugs Clay tighter, "I don't want you to go yet. I... I *just* got you, Clay."

Clay sighs. "I don't want to leave you either, George. But I have to go back. There's so many things I left behind, I can't just *abandon* them."

“Then...” a gulp, “then you should go,” George manages to say, but it comes out as a mumble. “You should go back to your family.”

Clay presses a kiss to George’s forehead. He can feel Clay smile against his skin. “What did I do to deserve such a handsome, caring, thoughtful boyfriend?”

George grumbles into Clay’s shirt, the ends of his ears tinted with pink, and his boyfriend laughs.

“But...” Clay suddenly adds, “Before I go, there’s actually one last thing I want to check.”



“Why did you *keep* that mask?”

“For the same reason I keep the pins,” Clay answers with a grin, looking fondly at the mask in his hands. “It’s a reminder that we broke the curse together, George.”

“Still,” George frowns, “I don’t trust it— *Clay, DON’T.*”

Clay had brought the mask in front of his face, as if he *missed* having it there and wanted a reminder. “Hm? What is it George?”

“What... what if it *resticks* to your face or something, Clay?! Don’t hold it there so close!”

Clay wheezes. “Don’t *worry* about it, George! The curse is gone. It’s not going to relapse, or whatever.”

George huffs. “I’m... I’m *not* worried about you,” he denies, in a very non-believable way. “But I swear, you’re going to be cursed *forever* if we have to find ten *more* things for you to live for.”

His boyfriend chuckles. “But *George*, if I have you by my side, I think we could do it!”

“Oh my *god*. That is *not* an invitation to get yourself cursed again, Clay! I swear, do *not* get yourself cursed again when you go back to Florida, or I’m going to *disown* you.”

“You wouldn’t~ Because you *looove* me too much~” Clay snickers, giving a quick peck to the top of George’s head. “But, uh, speaking of how I got cursed. You remember the way back to that antique shop, right?”

“Yeah, of course I do,” George replies, still red from Clay’s display of open affection. They were currently on their way there right now. “But I still can’t believe that creepy old lady was your *grandma*. Was everything else in that shop cursed like you?”

“No,” Clay shakes his head, “I’m pretty sure it was just me. Though, there were a couple things in there infused with magic, like the harmonica Sapnap bought.”

“So it’s not even an antique shop,” George snorts. “It’s *literally* a magic shop.”

“Pretty cool, right?”

“Until you realize she was literally selling her *grandson* to a *stranger*,” George harrumps. “Seriously, what is *wrong* with your grandma? *Why* did she curse you in the first place?”

“She didn’t do it out of ill-will,” Clay defends, shaking his head. “George, a... a year ago, I wasn’t in a good place. I didn’t have any plans on going to college. I had a lot of tech certifications, but I couldn’t land myself a job. My girlfriend cheated on me, and we broke up. I tried to do youtube,

but I was really unsure about myself then. I was insecure about my face and my voice and I don't... I don't think I loved myself, George. It wasn't like I *hated* being me, but I just, I didn't feel like someone special, you know? I didn't believe in myself, in my capacity to change the world for the better, to do *well* at life."

"Oh..." George blinks. "I'm sorry... to hear that." George felt bad. He wanted to hug Clay to comfort his boyfriend, but he settles with offering a hand instead. Clay takes it gratefully. "But, I still don't understand? Why did your grandma turn you into a doll?"

"Actually, she just turned me into my youtube icon," Clay laughs. "You know that picture I drew that's now on the fridge? It actually looks a lot like that one."

"But what was the *point*, Clay? Why not send you to therapy, have a heart-to-heart talk, just... *anything* else? Something that wasn't as drastic as, *oh, I'm going to turn my grandson into a doll and place a fucking curse on him!*"

Clay gives a slight wheeze. "I'm not sure either, George. Whatever her reason, I'm sure she thought she was making a choice that she thought was best for me. *And...!*" He grins cheesily, "Because of her decision, I got to meet *you!*"

"Well," George mumbles uncertainly, "We *have* mutual friends. We probably would've come across each other at *some* point."

"But would we have fallen in love with each other?"

George pauses, thinks about that. *Really* thinks about it. "I still probably would've," he admits.

"WHAT. George." Clay laughs. "You're totally lying."

"I am *not*," George huffs, then pauses, realizing he'd almost missed their stop. "Clay, we're here."

"What? *This* is the place? It's hardly even noticeable!"

George silently agreed. "You didn't know what the shop looked like from the outside?" he wonders.

"Well, yeah. I was in a paper bag when you and Sapnap left. I couldn't see anything."

George walks up to the front door. "Clay, I think... it's closed?"

His boyfriend follows him, "What? When does it open?"

"It won't for a while, I think," George answers, pointing to the sign on the door:

\* *Moving locations. Will be back next season~* \*

"How weird," George comments. "Does this mean we'll have to come back later?"

Clay, looking like a lightbulb has just gone off in his head, bends down to check under the welcome mat they're stepping on. "Move your foot, George."

"What are you *doing?*"

Clay straightens back up, a successful smirk on his face. There's a freaking *passport* in his hand. "I guess I know my grandma better than I thought," he huffs. Then he takes the shop sign in his hand and flips it over to the other side. There's another message on the back.

\* *Just remember that, to love yourself,* \*

\* *you must first learn to appreciate those things of which reside around you.* \*

“Oh!” George exclaims. “How did you know to *do* that?”

Clay stares intently at the message, as if he is thinking. “Dunno,” he says. Without warning, he bends down and plants a kiss on George’s mouth.

“WHAT, *Clay!* ” George jumps, his lips tingling from the brief contact, “You’re going to give me a heart attack!”

His boyfriend, his insane but *way-too-handsome* boyfriend, grins innocently. “I’m just appreciating the things around me, George. Do you not want me to?”

George hesitates. His heart is bouncing around his ribcage so wildly, he’s afraid of breaking under such an intense gaze. “W-well,” he stutters, “if it’s to help you love yourself...?”

Clay’s grin grows wider. “I knew you’d agree,” he whispers. And their lips meet again.



“How do you feel?” George asks. They’re standing inside of the airport. Any moment now, Clay is going to walk away and disappear. George thinks he would be lying if he said he wasn’t just a *little* bit upset. His nerves are bouncing everywhere.

“What do you mean?”

“You’ve been away from Florida for so long,” George answers. “And now you’re finally going back home. Are you excited?”

“George,” Clay whispers, “You’re wrong.”

“What?” A confused frown, “Clay, you’re not excited to go home?”

His boyfriend laughs. “That’s not it. George, my home... is wherever *you’re* at.”

George blinks, his mouth falls open. “...*Clay.* ”

“*Pshhhh* — you should see your face,” his boyfriend wheezes, “You look like a gaping fish.”

“*C-Clay! Don’t just...* ” George blushes profusely, “Don’t just *say* things like that so easily...”

“But I mean it, George. This isn’t goodbye, you know?” Clay smiles good-naturedly. “This is just a... *see you later.* Because I *will* come back.”

The wrinkling pain inside George fades a little. “Really? You... you mean that?”

“When have I ever lied to you?” is Clay’s reply.

Love bursts inside George, so he tackles his boyfriend into a hug. Clay hugs back, his long arms wrapping around him. Hugs with Clay were always so *safe*. George was going to miss these embraces. He was going to miss Clay, so fucking much. But he could wait. He would be patient.

“I... I’ll be waiting for you, okay? You *better* not break your promise.”

Clay chuckles next to his ear. "I won't," he swears.

They share one last kiss, and then Clay is walking away backwards, waving at George the whole time. George waves back with a stupid grin on his face. He doesn't feel as bad now as he did a few minutes ago. When he thinks of Clay's words, his insides only light up with hope.

*This isn't a goodbye. It's just a see-you-later.*

When Clay disappears from sight, George waits for the loneliness to hit him. But it doesn't. In the end, this wasn't the same as Sapnap leaving. When his friend had gone, he had been absorbed by a feeling of hopelessness. But even as Clay left, he had left his presence with George. Waiting at home would be crude drawings magneted to the fridge, a stack of smiley pins on his coffee table, a minecraft server with all his friends, and a phone call from his boyfriend.

George has never been so happy. Because Clay had embedded himself into his heart. And now, he'd never be lonely again.

## Chapter End Notes

When I started this story, my goal was ~600 kudos. But WOW, you guys over-deliver! 970+ kudos?! Seriously, thank you all so much... ♥♥♥

I know you're all probably quite sad about The Dream Doll ending, but I have good news! Because many expressed their interest back in Chapter 7, I've decided to create a side-story of this fic told in Dream's POV! Be sure to check that out if you're still hungry for Dream Doll content, I guess... ^\_^

Thank you all again for reading my second DNF fic, and leaving all your wonderful comments! My face hurt from smiling so much on the previous chapter. >u< If you liked this, be sure to check out my other stories or subscribe to me~ After all, this series isn't going to be my last DNF work...

Annnnd that'll be all, haha. Have a great rest of your day, lovely readers! Here's to hoping I'll see you again, maybe under a different fic... :)

## End Notes

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